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THREE SCORE AND TEN

By AMELIA E. BARR

Three Score Years and Ten
The Measure of a Man
The Winning of Lucia
Playing with Fire
All the Days of My Life

D. APPLETON AND COMPANY
Publishers New York

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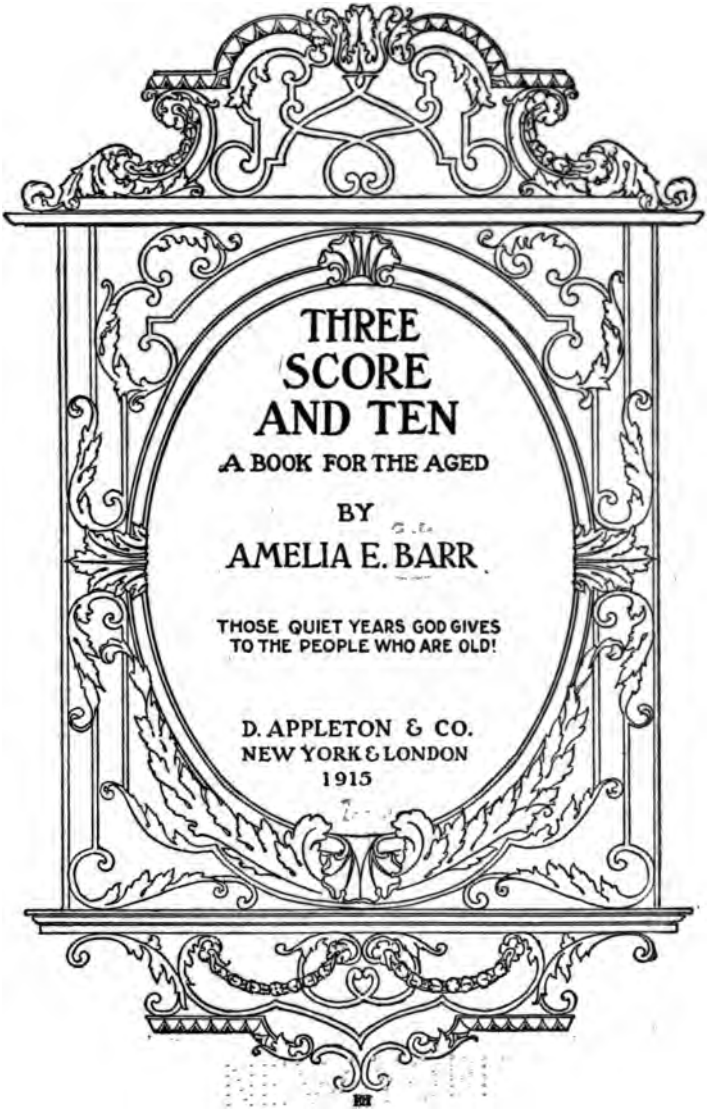

THREE SCORE AND TEN

A BOOK FOR THE AGED

BY

AMELIA E. BARR

THOSE QUIET YEARS GOD GIVES
TO THE PEOPLE WHO ARE OLD!

D. APPLETON & CO.
NEW YORK & LONDON
1915

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TO
THE HONORABLE CHAUNCEY MITCHELL DEPEW
OF
NEW YORK CITY
I RESPECTFULLY DEDICATE THIS BOOK
BECAUSE
HE REPRESENTS FRANKLY AND FULLY
THE LONG, HONORABLE SERVICE OF THIS LIFE,
AND
THE SURE AND CERTAIN HOPE
OF
THE LIFE WHICH IS TO COME

AMELIA E. BARR

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TO MY DEAR FRIENDS

KNOWN AND UNKNOWN

who like myself are living in the Land of Old Age, I offer these pages. Not in any spirit of counsel or advice they come, but as suggestions for thought or conversation or as ideas that may make pleasant the last good years of life. In a variety of minds we find cheer, and my desire is that this book may open up some fresh vistas to those that read it.

If I have touched eternal matters a little frequently, it has not been of deliberate intention. Any words about our future life have come from my pen as naturally and spontaneously as they would surely have come from my lips, had my reader and I been conversing. So then it is only a book of facts and suggestions that we might have talked over in happy hours together. Are we not all fellow-travellers to the Land which is very far off? And do we not all know that the Lord our God, is one God, and that "He is the strength of our hearts, and our Home-bringer!"

Amelia E. Barr.

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THREE SCORE AND TEN

I

A GOOD DAY

Abide with me, Lord, for the time is far spent, the shadows of evening are stretched out, and the day is declining upon me.

When Israel was a child, then I loved him. HOSEA 11:1.

Nevertheless I will remember my covenant with thee, in the days of thy youth; and I will accomplish unto thee an everlasting covenant. EZEKIEL 16:60.

I AM beginning to live now in those days of grace God has given me beyond the allotted term of human life, but I do not regard them as the end of life. They are a time of beginning again and of learning afresh how to make

ready for the new world before me. I wish to master in these years the fine art of dying well, quite as great a lesson as the fine art of living, about which everyone is so busy. I want to take a supple, joyous spirit with me into the Great Unknown; to grow eternally young, before I grow old.

And this is possible to those who have lived among things unseen, as well as things seen, who have kept every one of the strings of Life's harp in practice, and whose wellsprings of love and imagination lie too deep for the frost of Age to touch. And I believe in that sweet promise of the "times of restitution," when the child shall die one hundred years old, because then we shall all keep our child-heart, its freshness and trust and its power to be happy with small and simple things.

Thus nourished by the perennial dews of the heart and the intellect, we shall grow brighter and broader and more luminous unto the end of our days; so much so, that a waft of radiance from the soul may give to the aged face that

light and calm, specially reserved for those who have come uphill all the way; and so dwelt much in the fresher air of heights out of sight of the trivial and out of the hearing of strife. Then we shall have that thirst for the Unknown, and that longing to "go beyond" which only those who love God can feel. For a good Old Age is neighbor to a blessed Eternity. It is a kind of priesthood.

Age, to those who have lived in their intellects as well as their hearts, ought never to be a weariness. The old fire is not killed by years. Far from it. It glows within, rather than flames without—that is all. Then the deeds they have done, the trials they have conquered, all their cares and tears and pain, have become, through the subtle alchemy of years, a song and sign in the wilderness. So if the old can sing, pray listen to them. They have perhaps attained to a prophetic strain. If they can paint, they will likely give you a glimpse of the inner man or woman behind the fleshly veil. If they can write, ponder their words. There

may be in them a hope, a "call" sent specially to you. For if God wants a messenger, may he not choose one who "stands between," and close to both?

I have talked with old men and women recently whose sunlight has "never melted into the light of common day;" who found the air, not emptied of wonder, but fuller of it than ever before; to whom Achilles still shouted in the trenches; who could see yet that Helen was lovely, and could wrathfully watch the towers of Ilium flame to heaven. That they called their heroes and events by names that Homer never heard, was only an accident of time; their souls were as young and lively as those that led and fed the fight before Troy three thousand years ago.

It was the twenty-ninth of March, A. D. 1911, and I had wakened early to watch the coming in of my eightieth birthday. During the night, the moss-grown past had revealed itself to me in certain ways, and I had sounded all its recollections. It was now cockcrow, and I went to

the window and saw Nature in that ineffable mood when she is not quite awake but lies drowsing in the cold light of the waning moon and the earliest dawn.

I dare say everyone has noticed that sight is the last of our senses to awaken from deep sleep, and it was hardly until this moment that I could say, "I am awake." My brain had been long active, my ears cognizant of every kind of noise, my sense of smell gratified by the fresh odors from the pines coming in through an open window, my touch curious, and my taste anticipating the fragrant morning coffee, but only when I moved and began to rise, did my eyes slowly and reluctantly open. Then I knew and felt that I was really awake and not dreaming, and I rose and went to the window to see what kind of day it was going to be.

I like fine weather for my birthday. Coincidence for many, many years has made it symbolical of a good year. I do not profess to be disdainful of augury. May not our good angels teach and lead and encourage us by the signs

or symbols we ourselves have chosen? So I was glad to see the sun rising bright and clear, and I did not mind the day being Friday. I can find more fortunate things about Friday than unfortunate ones. The Scandinavians thought it the luckiest day in the week. It is the day on which Adam was created. It is the Mahometan Sabbath. In Scotland it is the choice day for weddings. Certainly it has been a fortunate day to the United States.

I gave, however, but a passing thought to the character of the day, yet it is very true that the genius of each day of the week is on us. In some subtle way, it draws to certain duties and carries us with it. Sunday is the father of the week, and all of us know it. Somehow the rest of the week takes after it. A good deal depends on the beginnings of things, and Sunday is the beginning of the week. It is usual to say, "All's well that ends well." It may be so, but if it does not begin well, and go on well, it is not all well, no matter what proverb endorses it.

A GOOD DAY

Concerning any day you may say between six and eight you seal its fate. So it is good to wake up as if a bugle called you. There is sure to be something we ought to do today. Very likely, Little Faith may sigh, "The same cares! The same trifling work! I did it yesterday! I must do it over again today—and tomorrow—and tomorrow! Oh the weary years! I have no pleasure in them!" Far better say as cheerfully as possible, "I have a deal to do today, but God will help me. If I have to go anywhere, He will take care of me. Whatever cross or care comes to me, I will cast it on Him. He has Grace to help *in every time of need.* Is not this one verse a bugle call to the weary and old and faint-hearted? For there is not a good, brave woman in the world who does not wish to work as long as she lives. What are candles for, but to burn out?

A day does not seem much time, yet we cannot wisely count our life but by its days. The prophet Daniel reveals God to us by the grand

and significant name of "the Ancient of days." Three times over in the seventh chapter he thus calls Him who sat upon a "throne . . . like the fiery flame, and his wheels as burning fire," "whose garment was white as snow, and the hair of his head like the pure wool." Old Jacob speaks explicitly of "the days of the years of his life," and David asked to be taught to "number his days." We are then to take life day by day. We are to ask for daily bread and daily help and daily consolation. We are to trust "the Ancient of days" for all we need from day to day. And here are two comfortable verses from Ecclesiasticus that perhaps we notice too little. We can ponder them five minutes, and then we may feel like taking the advice they give.

"Defraud not thyself of the good day, and let not the part of a good desire overpass thee.

"Give and take and sanctify thy soul."

ECCLUS. 14:16.

For other things mild Heav'n a time ordains,
And disapproves that care, though wise in show,

A GOOD DAY

That with superfluous burden loads the day,
And when God sends a cheerful hour refrains.
MILTON.

I had had joy in waking, and Oh, how good that is! And the waking prefigured the day, as it generally does, which was a good day, full of love and kindness and delightful remembrances.

I am now then in my eighty-first year and I am glad with all my heart that I have still to labor and that even more abundantly. Nor do I say ignorantly that I am glad that the sorrow has kept pace with the labor. For I know and am sure that every heartache and headache, that every weary, wakeful hour, and every one of Age's slow, cold tears, are known to Him, who knew the why and the wherefore of every moment's grief and weariness.

And when circumstances have been too hard or too cruel for me, and I have longed for some actual, visible help, then I have spread open before me God's great charter of comfort and deliverance, as it is given to us in Romans the

eighth chapter and the twenty-eighth verse. Generally, I run my finger slowly over the verse. The words were good to see, but I always felt them to be surer if I touched them with my finger. The *touch* of God's promise assured me.

In the evening I was urged to go with a party to some entertainment, but I did not suffer myself to be persuaded. For many years I have retired into the peace and darkness of my own room between eight and nine o'clock. A noted English physician once said to me, "If you wish to have a vigorous old age, go into darkness and silence ten hours out of every twenty-four." I found out the wisdom of this advice at once, and I have strictly followed it. It was in darkness we were formed, and it is in dark and silent sleep all our physical losses and injuries are made good and relieved.

Yea, and it is in darkness that our souls usually meet that Being who has haunted us from childhood, that Being who is ever near, sometimes felt, but never seen. There is indeed a

sense in which darkness has more of God than light. He dwells in the thick darkness, and it is in solitary, silent darkness the Infinite comes most truly near to us. How can I express it? Words only reduce the Infinite to the finite.

But, Oh you men and women who are old and desolate, cruelly deserted by earthly love that selfishness or younger loves have killed, go into the darkness and wait there and whisper His Name, and put out your tired, failing hand into the darkness, and there will certainly come heavenly moments when you will know and be sure that Another Hand touched yours. This is not fancy. It is the truth. In great trouble, go into the darkness and seek God, and you will find Him—not probably, but surely find Him.

This ever-present hope would have kept me from any entertainment earth could offer, but really it would have been a prodigious trial to have sat three hours trying *not* to hear Wagner's music. Before I can understand it, I shall have to be born again. Memories of the

musical charms of Rossini, Donizetti, Balfe, and Sullivan haunt my ear chambers, and refuse to be dislodged.

I have, however, made this note solely with the view of enunciating a very important rule for those who are growing old to observe: it is this, *never allow anyone to impose his pleasures on you.* Those younger think you ought to like whatever they like. You cannot do that. Do not try to do it. You are sure to be out of time and place with the young, and more certain still to be "out" with your own comfort and pleasure. If you have any rights, one of the most important is to choose for yourself the way in which you prefer to spend your time.

I knew an old gentleman who was coaxed and worried into joining a fishing party going in a yacht to the banks of Newfoundland. He was wretched every hour of his pleasure trip. But if he had been allowed to go quietly to the little farmhouse among the Vermont mountains and daunder up and down the trout becks, with

an old-fashioned creel and fishing-rod, he would have been perfectly happy—happy all day, and happy in the long, quiet evenings, talking with the farmer about the days when they were both young and went fishing and courting together. And how many old ladies I have seen driving about the great cities of Europe, quite indifferent to their romance and history, and longing with all their hearts to be back in their New York home or in their pretty place on the banks of the Hudson. The old have some inalienable rights, and one of them is to choose their own pleasures.

All the day long the hours went delightfully. My daughter Alice sat by me, and we recalled together the birthdays we have spent close to each other's heart. Then I went further back and told her sacred, secret incidents about my childhood—incidents I seldom speak of, but never forget. Hosea says, "When Israel was a child, then I [God] loved him." [Hosea 11:1.] And if I forget all other days, I will

keep in everlasting remembrance the days in my childhood, when God loved me:

God loved me when I was a child,
  And though I've wandered eighty years,
With weary feet and aching head
  And eyes half-blind with lonely tears:
He ne'er forgot my longing soul,
  So oft by earthly hopes beguiled,
For with an Everlasting Love
  He loves; who loved me when a child.

II

THE WONDERFUL CALL

There is no Death! What seems so, is transition;
This life of mortal breath,
Is but a suburb of the life elysian,
Whose portal we call Death.

TODAY I had a visit from a lady I had known slightly during my last winter's stay in the Fifth Avenue Hotel in New York. We had not been intimate nor even friendly, but there had been a spiritual wireless between our souls which both had probably recognized, yet suffered to lay speechless and unacknowledged. She was dressed in the deepest mourn-

ing, and for a moment I was astonished. Hitherto, she had appealed to me mainly by her exquisite toilets, which both in the morning and the evening were notably of light and bright shades of lovely colors and materials, and this somberly draped figure with the pallid face and sorrow-haunted eyes was a most unexpected sequel to the card bearing her name.

I went to meet her silently, but her grief soon found tears and words. "Oh!" she cried. "I have lost my son. You have seen him! He is gone. He will never come back to me!"

"You will go to him."

"He has forgotten me. No word comes from him. I know not whether he lives at all. Even in dreams, I cannot meet him, though I go to sleep praying to do so. Where has he gone? Can he remember? Does he love me yet? Oh you that are the mother of dead children, tell me something to comfort me!"

I kissed her wet face, and removed her heavy lugubrious hat, veil and cloak, and then I said: "Sit down by me, and we will talk this trouble

out. You have no need of those ugly black garments. Why wear them, if you believe your son has gone to wear eternal white?"

"He was a good man. He lived close to God. He told me God had sent for him. That he must needs obey the wondrous voice that called him. If I go to him, shall I know him among the thousands and tens of thousands there? Will he know me? That is one uncertainty that troubles me."

"But it is *not* an uncertainty. Christ at his last supper on earth with his disciples spoke of a more blessed meal in Heaven at which they would meet him. But if his friends were to be changed or lose their personality, where would have been the joy of their meeting?"

"But will my David—David—be just as he was when with me?"

"If the Word of God is true, he will. There is nothing we possess in all the world that respects our individuality more than the Bible. In it, every man answers for himself, both in Heaven and on earth. Gabriel is one person,

Michael is another, Jesus knows all his own *by name.* And after Christ had passed through death and the grave, he gave to his disciples this supreme assertion, as to his continued personality: *"It is I, Myself!"*

"Yes, yes," she cried, "I remember."

"Well, then, if Christ retained his personal identity, his grace and love and wisdom after he had tasted death, we also shall do the same. We shall say, when we meet our beloved again, *'It is I, myself!'* Do not doubt it."

"I will take the four words into my heart. I will remember them constantly. If my son only keeps his personality——"

"That is something, but not enough," I interrupted. "Keeping our individuality would be no comfort to us, if we did not also keep our memory. We are promised that we shall see Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in the Kingdom of Heaven, but if they have lost their personality and we have lost our memory, how would that promise avail us? Paul says: 'His converts will be his joy in Heaven,' but if he did not

recognize them, how could they be his joy? David anticipated meeting his dead child in Heaven, yet what comfort would there be in this meeting, if the child had lost its identity, or David had lost his memory? Do you see then that our personality and our memory are bound up in our immortality? What would endless life be worth without them?"

"Nothing. We should be mere shades—isolated beings."

"And Oh, such lonely beings, even among the multitude no man can number! But I can give you another comforting thought that seems to have sprung naturally from some mother's soul. *God made the family tie.* It was His divine idea. Man of himself would never have thought of it. Savages, even yet, do not regard it. All through the Bible it is treated with the greatest tenderness. God did not save Noah only. He saved him with all his family. Peter did not go to the Roman centurion alone; his whole household was baptized; and when Paul, in one short sentence,

would describe the moral degradation of the Romans, he says they were 'without natural affection.' When I go to the heavenly land I am sure I shall not find myself homeless. My loved ones will have a mansion prepared for me."

"Yes, I remember, Christ went to prepare a mansion for those he loved."

"Can we think of Abraham in Heaven without Sarah, of Isaac without Rebecca, of Paul without Timothy, of Christ without Mary and John? The thought is impossible, because God has made it so. Is he not *'the God of the families of the whole earth'?*"

"If I could only believe as you do!"

"You must believe. Belief is everything. *'By faith women receive their dead again.'* This is the creed that is engraved upon the heart of every mother and father, husband and wife, brother and sister and friend. Only One Hand wrote it there, and that Hand never wrote a lie."

"Is it the Bible tells you all that you say?"

"It is, but we are not left without personal assurances. Ask the mother whose child has dropped from her arms into an open grave. Ask the widow whose companion has suddenly been taken away. They could tell of secret comforts, too sacred to speak about. *They have been visited. They know.* This I am sure of personally. It is not any form of imagination. The simplest see clearest. Then sorrow is turned into strange joy, and the cup of our grief is so full of glorious hope that we know it was mingled in Heaven and not on earth."

"I want to tell you something. Three nights before David died, I was going about my room putting everything in its place, for I do not sleep well in an untidy room, and David tapped at my door and I told him to come in. And his face was changed, and he looked taller, and spoke like one far away. I asked, 'What is it, David?' and he said in a voice of rapture, 'Mother, I have been called—and I answered the call. Do not fret. It is all right. You

know Dr. Steward said the call might come any hour. It has come.'

"'O David! David!' I cried; and he sat down, and tried to comfort me. He reminded me that Job had looked forward to God calling him, and had said, 'I will answer thee.'" [Job 14:15.]

A great deal of conversation relating to a variety of "calls" followed, which I cannot relate at this time, but I finally went to my library, and selected a volume of Sophocles, which contained one of the most remarkable spiritual "calls" that has ever been revealed:

'An unfathomable call from the depths of the ancient woods, a voice that drew like gravitation, that sucked like a vortex—far off, yet near—in some distant world, yet close at hand—and it cried:

"Hark Œdipus! King Œdipus! Come hither! Thou art wanted!"

It was no thunderbolt from God.
With flaming fire, that slew him.
But either Some One, whom the gods had sent
To guide his steps; or gentleness of mood
Had moved the powers to ope the way.
He died no death to mourn for,

Did not leave this world
Worn out with pain and sickness, but his end,
If any ever was—was wonderful."

She listened like a child charmed with the majesty and music of words, but I felt there was no comfort for her heart in them. "That call was a long time ago," she said tentatively, and I answered, "It was the same voice that called your son. Less than a year ago, I heard of an old man who stood up in the Quaker meeting-house, and said, 'Other foundation can none lay but that which is laid in Christ Jesus.' He was about to sit down, but instead he stepped forward, and added, 'For the many mercies I have received, I thank, honor and magnify my God.' He died in the night."

"You think that he was called?"

"Yes. In a moment he was made aware of it. Between his resolve to sit down and his walking forward to thank God for all his grace and goodness to him, he heard that unfathomable call, that draws like gravitation, far off,

yet near, in some distant world, yet close at hand, and his soul had answered it. The world we cannot see is always blending with the world we can see."

"Was he a good man?"

"Yes, he loved God truly. He was in spiritual matters a mystic. His religion was an internal revelation. He prayed even in his dreams. He had a little grandson who also was unconsciously a mystic. The child was called home suddenly one day when he was but ten years old, and in his last moments cried out with a rapturous entreaty, 'Dear Lord God! Open the Door!' "

"Such a death is a great happiness," she said, and I answered in a conscious tone of triumph:

"It is victory! Death is always either victory or defeat.

"Rest they not well, whose pilgrim staff and shoon
Lie in their tent? For on the golden street
They walk and stumble not, on roads star-strewn
With their unsandalled feet."

"Yes, but it is so far off and so mysterious,

and the sorrow and the loss are in our very hearts."

"Well, then, we can at least say as we go:

"Whatever there is to know,
That we shall know some day."

"He was so young!" she cried. "So young! Only thirty-nine!"

"God created man to be immortal and made him to be an image of his own eternity. And the souls of the righteous are in the hands of God and their hope is full of immortality, for, 'He being made perfect, in a short time fulfilled a long time. For his soul pleased the Lord, therefore hasted he to take him away from among the wicked.' [Wisdom of Solomon, 4:13 and 14.]

" 'He pleased God, and was beloved of Him, so that living among sinners he was translated.

" 'Yes, speedily was he taken away, lest that wickedness should alter his understanding or deceit beguile his soul.' [Wisdom of Solomon, 4:10 and 11.]

"He did so much good. As he grew older he would have done more."

"Life is not in length of days," I answered.

" 'For honorable age is not that which standeth in length of time, nor that measured by number of years.

" 'But wisdom is the gray hair unto men, and an unspoiled life is old age.

" 'But the righteous live forever, their reward also is with the Lord, and the care of them is with the Most High; with his right hand shall he cover them, and with his arm shall he protect them.' "

"Are all those promises in the Bible?"

"You will find them and many more good promises in the Wisdom of Solomon, fourth and fifth chapters. The Wisdom of Solomon is in what is called The Apocrypha. It is bound separately from the Bible, but contains in its books, wonderful treasures of love and wisdom."

"Then why is it not in the regular Bible?"

"You must ask theological synods and cleri-

cal scholars. I read it constantly. I find God's Word in it constantly. The two books of Esdras are wonderful—but perhaps clergymen found them wrong. I do not. I speak only as my experience leads me."

"I will buy an Apocrypha."

"You will do wisely, I assure you."

"Will you be here long?" she asked.

"No," I answered. "I go home tomorrow."

"Then I shall not see you again?"

"Not at present."

"Tell me something to read."

"There is nothing grander, nothing more comforting than the fifteenth chapter of the first book of Corinthians. Read also St. Paul's death song. You will find it in the second book of Timothy, chapter four, verses six to eight. Words were never more finely touched. They are the farewell of a heart at ease, of a soul knowing its labors finished, its storms gone by. We have no higher expression of victory in the presence of the Last Enemy. Read them whenever your heart fails you."

So we parted, and I did not feel as if I had done much good. But giving counsel or comfort is like the act of sowing seed. We sow words upon the heart, as the husbandman casts seed upon the ground. Some words fall on barren hearts, some bring forth a hundredfold. Some seeds fall and die on the soil where they were cast, others grow to a rich harvest. What a mystery is the common act of sowing! And none can escape this duty. Even an old woman comes across little patches of neglected heart-soil, and as she passes by, she ought to cast into it a few seed-words of comfort or advice; just as the angels and the birds drop seeds into the desolate, unplanted places over which they fly.

I am sure my companion was really in earnest, but she was weary. For the soul not accustomed to reflection on spiritual matters grows dark, and is quite unable to comprehend and reason about subjects beyond its intelligence. It has to be slowly taught and to grow in knowledge, even as a little child rises step

by step to the full wisdom of a trained scholar.

The subject of our continued individuality, throughout all the changes death and reincarnation might bring, was, however, to me, a clinging thought. There are few days in which I do not remember, and recall it in some form or other; and Mrs. L.'s crude, but effectual, questioning kept my soul in a little flurry of unrest. So I let the book fall from my hand and began to quietly consider the question. First, I asked myself, if continued physical identity was material? The body is a constantly changing, shifting, agglomeration of molecules. We are stout, we are thin, we are worn away by sickness, and then built up again, and the form so rebuilt is not the form worn away. In seven years at most, we are assured that the body is entirely changed.

Yes, but our memory, our consciousness, our will, our understanding remain untouched by the physical destruction. They belong to the spiritual being, which never loses its identity. Several severe extremities of this kind had

been to me personal experiences, and though the physical body wasted to its mere frame, the real Amelia was not touched—her faith and her doubt, her desire and her will, and above all her love and her memory were vital and unchanged. That was my first consideration.

I am not a trained logical thinker. I take a thought or question just as it arises, and I believe the majority of women do the same. So I feel no hesitation in confessing that my next consideration seems to be a little off the regular line. It is this: in dreaming, we ourselves are out of the body and are met and seen and spoken to by other personalities who are out of their bodies at the same time; that is, our astral bodies meet in the astral world, while our physical bodies are sleeping on our beds in our earthly homes. And we know each other and are sure of our identity, for during this meeting we receive directions, warnings, or comforting messages. For our soul kindred are often kinder than our natural relations; and I will let the two words stand as I have written

them, for Oh, how near and loving is the word "kindred" compared with the tie called a "relation!" Yea, even in this life we are sometimes conscious of a peculiar drawing affection to other souls, and this is evidence of a spirtual kinship with them.

I believe with all my soul that the human countenance will retain its identity, though undoubtedly a glorified identity. Those who have seen their dead knew them at once, for we must remember that it is the expression rather than the features which makes the identity. The face enshrined in our heart, the face long in the grave but which comes to us in dreams, is not the mechanical countenance of our beloved, but its abstract, its idealization, its essence and life; it is the spirit of the face. This is so much of a truth, that members of the same family, driven apart by destiny, develop as they grow old a mysterious indefinable likeness to their kindred quite independent of any intercourse with them.

Then I also was weary, and having assured

myself that I had never found in all Scripture one word which proposed to make a soul fit for everlasting life by subtracting it from its own human life, I went quietly and happily to sleep —and to dream.

I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live.—St. John 11:25.

O strong soul by what shore
Tarriest thou now?

* * * *

Yes, in some far shining sphere,
Conscious or not of the past,
Still thou performest the word
Of the Spirit, in whom thou dost live
Prompt, unwearied as here.

MATHEW ARNOLD.

III

WORLDS NOT VERY FAR OFF

I know not; and I glory that I do
Not know; that for Eternity's great ends
God counted me as worthy of such trust
That I need not be told.
Who knows, what loyalties in store
Lay one step past the entrance door?

A YOUNG man talking with me today said he had had many a good chance in life, but by some ill luck, for which he was not in any way responsible, he had lost them all. I tried to tell him how foolish it was to talk of

"chances," but he was not interested, and soon went away.

The subject, however, set me thinking. Had my long life been a series of chances, or had the end been foreseen from the beginning? It pleased me to go back to my earliest childhood and by the second sight of memory see if I could detect anything like a plan in the strange changes and vivid events which cut its years up into sections and chapters. When we have read a tale through, we can go back and arrange it in periods; and my life is but a tale that is told. Surely I could do with the years I had lived through what could be done with the imaginary incidents that some other mind had put together.

I sent Memory back to that little town in the North of England, where Memory herself was but a shade, and behind which I cannot, dare not look, and slowly traveled with her the homeward road back to Cherry Croft on the Hudson. I sat happily smiling, as I recalled the exquisite first sensations of life in Shipley,

the simple life among the busy weaving people, whose looms were then in their homes. Once while there, I might have been drowned but for a whisper in my ear which told me what to do. I was hardly four years old, and was playing near a well which was level with the ground and that day uncovered. I can see yet its walls of clean white cobble stones, and the day shine above the water, that pressed me down. And I was afraid, but I could not call my nurse. Then there was a whisper in my ear, "Press your feet against the side." Some Hand helped me, and I did so, and rose to the top as if shot there; and my nurse was just looking down and caught me as I rose. The whole incident is confused, yet clear. I can hear the whisper as I write. I can feel the woman's clutch at my hair, and have a dim recollection of being carried home and scolded for going near the well—a scolding that seemed unjustifiable to me because I was keeping house in Mr. Denby's big lumber pile, and I wanted water for some reason or other. Was that a chance?

No. There was work laid out for me to do—my work—and He gave my angel charge over me, that she might keep me safe in all my ways.

When I was between six and seven years old I climbed into a hay loft in order to have peace to finish the story of the Forty Thieves and I fell through a trap door upon some sharp iron, and was found insensible from loss of blood. A woman who never went there, went on that day to look for eggs, being obliged to do so by some unusual event. I was barely saved, and to this moment can feel the scar upon my head every time I comb my hair. Why did this thing happen? Was it chance?

All through my childhood and girlhood, I can recall preservations, interferences, changes unlooked-for, personalities met or lost which have powerfully influenced my life, or are yet doing so. If I had married the man I expected to marry, I should never have left Yorkshire, for people did not go to and fro in the earth in those days and call it "pleasuring." I should have lived a come-day, go-day life of ease and

plenty, had probably a large family of strong healthy children, sons and daughters of the soil, fed and bred in their native air and doubtless saturated with admirable English opinions and prejudices, and today, if I still lived, would be watching composedly the progress of a war which I should deplore but have no fears concerning.

Well, I married the man God chose for me. No other could have so well prepared me in seventeen years for what I have done in the ensuing half-century. No other could have given me the changes, the travel, the difficulties, the labors and sufferings, which came to me through this happy union, and which alone could have prepared me for the battle of life it has been my joy and blessing to wage ever since.

The details of those affairs would make a big book of apparent coincidences. They melted and modified or entirely changed one another, but all things have worked together for the best in every way. Was this network of events far-

off and near, looked for and unexpected, joyful and sorrowful, mere chance? No! Of one fact, as I sit thinking here, I am sure: that everything that has happened me has had strong relationships with the work I was to do. And no matter what our work, all work is sacred and of eternal importance, because it is the work "given us to do." Nothing honest we busy ourselves about is common or unclean, for the life and work of the humblest man or the humblest woman is full of illimitable issues.

In any condition life is always worth while. However long and hard it is, we must live it out and thoroughly earn a grave. The steps of those who love and trust God are ordered by Him and He will direct their way. Had I not been sure of this in my inmost soul, I would not in my eighty-fourth year have left the solitude of my mountain home and come into the turmoil and struggle of New York. Perhaps in its absolute retirement my soul was rusting. The battle of life, with God as our Helper, is

always splendid; the truce of Life is usually degenerating and unhappy.

Often friends have said to me, "Madam, you live too much in the past." Do I? No, indeed! The past is as much mine as the present. I go constantly back to it for instruction and comfort. Today it has assured me, that nothing has ever happened by chance, but that every step I had to take, was ordered by Infinite Love and Wisdom.

I have a great liking for the past. When a year is going into the Eternity behind us, I always sit up to bid it farewell. I recall the days we have lived happily together, and at that hour I acknowledge that even its trials and sorrows have been full of strange joys, that will leave on my future sweet and lasting perfumes. I look back once more on the troubles I have had during the past years, for they have all found a place in my present, and gratefully confess I should have been a loser without them. I recall also the pleasures past years have brought me, and I know then that even pass-

ing acquaintances have had their meaning and done their work, and that if the tissue of life had been all woven of love and happiness, it could not have been better fashioned.

So at the stroke of midnight when the year's sweet fable ends we part like friends with smiles and tender memories and without a single reproach. Then all the past years seem to rise above and beyond me, the charm of something more than earthly is theirs, and I have for them that dreamy affection we are apt to give to whatever will "never come back again."

I have a friend. Her name is Mary. She is twenty years younger than I am, but her affection is twenty years old in this world, and I know not how far it dates back in other reincarnations, nor yet what names and relationships it may have borne. It is enough that here our companionship is help and comfort and enlightenment to both.

She entered with a smile, and the scent of violets which she carried in her hands. "Good

morning," she said cheerfully. "You look so well content, Amelia, what are you thinking about?"

"A pleasant incident that happened to me when I was traveling a hard road with two little children. It always makes me happy to remember it. A man traveling in the same train was so unselfishly kind to us, I often think of him and always with the truest pleasure. I never saw him before, and I never saw him again, and I did not even know his name. These little helps and pleasures that just happen as we journey through life spring up from the ground like wildflowers. They come and go and seem to have no special connection with us, but we never forget them. It is more than sixty years since the event, but I remember his look, his voice, and his kind eyes, as well as if all had happened yesterday."

"It is not often things that just happen make one happy."

"They ought to. Happening and happiness are two words that spring from the same source

or root. Whoever coined the word must have been made happy by some good unexpected surprise. I think in such happy 'happenings,' there must always be the element of surprise to make them perfect. I hope that accidental pleasures—pleasant surprises—will be one feature of the joys of Heaven."

"Such as——?"

"Meeting an old friend unexpectedly on the streets of the Heavenly City; hearing a song we had known and loved on earth, sung by some angel walking in a garden of Heaven; gathering on the hills of God sweet blue violets or white hyacinths full of the scents of Paradise; even perhaps finding a little home among the mountains prepared for me, for I do hope there will be country houses in Heaven. I am afraid of cities, and the multitudes no man can number."

"You dream of a very tangible and material heaven, do you not?"

"I doubt if any mortal is yet fit for one that is not 'earth upon heaven.' Milton in some

fine lines describes heaven as a better earth:

What if earth
Be but the shadow of heaven, and things therein
Each to each other like, more than on earth is thought?

Mortimer Collins says:

Very far off its marble cities seem;
Very far off—beyond our sensual dream.
Yet does the turbulent surge,
Howl on its very verge;
One moment—and we breathe the Evermore.

"Can anything be more real and personal than St. John's description of Heaven? 'Behold the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes, and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain.'"

"Well," said Mary, "the Athenian living about the same time as John looked forward to nothing unusual in the next life. He is represented as caressing his dog, ere he goes out and fares to the House of the Lord of Many Guests. There was neither fear nor trouble in his attitude. He believed that all good

things awaited the newcomer to Hades, and that Happiness was betrothed to him in a garden of myrtles."

"But Oh, how sweetly tender and homely is St. John's revelation of the nearness and dearness of the Home Our Father intends for those who shall be able to claim its peace and felicity!"

"Do you think much of these things, Amelia?"

"They mix and mingle with all my thoughts now."

"Did they always do so?"

"No; but as we grow older, the veil between this world and the next grows more and more translucent, and we look anxiously but hopefully into the darkness before us. To the outside world, we seem the same, but inwardly the archway widens fast and it is good to ask ourselves often,

"When earth breaks up, and heaven expands,
How will the change strike me and you,
In the house not made with hands?"

"I am twenty years younger than you," answered my friend, "but I think a great deal about the future life. More people do so, I am sure, than is commonly believed. Everyone is timid about spiritual confidences."

"Yes, but that is a great fault and a great loss. We are expressly told not to restrain them."

"Well then, if we are to think of Heaven as a world materially good and of God making his tabernacle with men, we must believe in a *personal* God; for a mere Force or some unknowable intangible Power, could not be a dweller in the homes of men—as St. John represents him."

"An impersonal God, my dear Mary, is no God at all. Such a being is as inconceivable as a circle without a center, or a thought without a thinker."

"And Heaven might be closer to us than we have been accustomed to believe? You quote Mortimer Collins as saying, 'Very far off its marble cities seem?' "

"Yes, but the closing lines of the verse negative this opinion:

"Yet does the turbulent surge,
Howl on its very verge;
One moment—and we breathe the Evermore."

"You think, then, that Heaven may not be far, far away beyond the constellations and beyond all our dreams of space?"

"The location of Heaven as a place is absolutely hidden from us, but we are at liberty to think upon certain facts which we do know and which bear a relationship to the subject."

"What are they?"

"We know, Mary, that we are in a world of spirits, as well as in a world of men. Men have seen them, talked with them, and they do constantly interfere in our lives, though the great majority are either in ignorance of the fact or are indifferent to it or positively unbelieving of it:

Millions of spiritual creatures walk this earth,
Both when we wake and when we sleep.

"That was Milton's opinion, and Milton was

blind; he saw with the inward or spiritual eye. He *knew*. Mary, listen to me with an open heart. Consider that right in our midst there is another world which we daily use and abuse and constantly come in contact with, about which we are, except in isolated respects, as profoundly ignorant as we are of the spiritual world. Who can teach us how to talk with beasts and birds and reptiles and insects? What comradeship have we with the beings who people the great seas? We smite and kill all these inhabitants of a world not ours, and they cry out, but do we comprehend their accusations? Relatively we may say that we have as much knowledge of the angelic life as of that of the majority of the lives of the animal kingdom with its wonderful inhabitants in the sea and the air and the earth."

"They are a great mystery to us, I have often thought of it."

"Yet, they have habits, passions, and even the same diseases that we have. Do they sin? Can they sin? Have they sinned?"

"Who knows?"

"Yes, Mary, we are expressly told in the Scriptures, that they 'groan and wait for their salvation.' And we are assured that eventually there will be a loving understanding between man and this inferior world around him —when the lion and lamb will lie down peacefully together, and 'the child put its hand on the cockatrice's nest, and not be injured.'"

"Now I remember, Amelia, that there is a great deal about animals in the Bible, and horses and oxen are spoken of as in Heaven. Wonderful creatures! And the Holy Spirit took the form of a dove! Oh, I am going to study this subject. I will begin next Sunday."

"Begin today. It is one of the most fascinating of Bible studies. Isaiah, Amos, Malachi, Nahum—begin with these books and read specially what Nahum says about lions in the second chapter and eleventh verse, and onward. This inferior world, which surrounds us and mingles with our very life, is kept wonderfully before us in God's Word, and we are plainly

and explicitly shown that they are God's servants, that they fulfil his will, and that He feeds and cares for them. Well then, dear Mary, if there is an inferior world in such close relationship with our world, may there not be a superior world also, much nearer to us than we can imagine? Angelic help comes in extremities with marvelous speed. Prayer is often answered before an answer appears possible. God is said to be a *present* help, not a far-off one. We live and move and breathe in God. We have danger, sickness, trouble; nevertheless He holds us by our right hand."

"What do we know of angels, Amelia?"

"We know authoritatively, that they are tidings-bringers and ministering spirits, that they are not of the same rank, that they receive and obey orders, that they administer and also serve, that they are of our similitude and nature; that, in fact, a good man or woman is, as the Bible says, only a little lower than the angels."

"And they are our friends, are they not?"

"No doubt good angels love us and are glad to visit and help us. Many whose eyes have been washed clear by penitential tears, have seen them; many more have met them dreaming. Jacob on his mysterious journey, sleeping on the sands of the lonely desert with a stone for a pillow, saw them passing between Heaven and earth, spoke with a Mighty One, and pleaded with Him until the dawning for a blessing—and Jacob is far from being the only son of man, who has wrestled in prayer with angels."

"Yet after all, Amelia, we know little about them."

"But the time is promised when we shall know more. There is to be 'a manifestation of the sons of God.'"

"Do you mean that it will be a general one?"

"No. We must be worthy of such visitors. If there is one thing remarkable about angels' visits, it is the suddenness of their appearance. When Jacob fell asleep that wonderful night, there was no sign of their nearness to him. It

was just like any other night. When the shepherds saw the heavenly host, they were keeping watch over their flocks. The stars were moving as usual. It was the midnight. The Bible is full of such angelic visitations, but all came suddenly and unexpectedly.

"Looking back over the long centuries, there must be few souls now on this earth, who have not relatives in this higher angel world. And O Mary, how much kinder, how much more just, these kindred souls will be to us, than our kindred of flesh and blood!

"Yes, for they would *know all,* and then it would be easy to understand and *forgive all.*"

"O Amelia, how true that is! Here it is very seldom possible for us to tell *all.*"

"And so, Mary, we receive always a very partial, often an unjust, judgment."

"And you really think angels take an interest in our daily life?"

"I really do think so,

> We little dream
> Our daily strife some angel's theme;

"yet our life is but a tragic drama with an angel audience. We are a spectacle to men and angels, said Paul."

"Well, Amelia, good-bye! We have said as much as I can think over for the next week, and I hope we have given no offence by our speculations. It is evident we never know *who* is present."

Then I was alone, and suddenly much depressed. The temperature of the room felt colder. Something had gone from me. Was it my own angel? Had I come too rashly to my conclusions about the angelic world? Had I grieved my angel by it? But if we raise a question, we must come to conclusions, either by our heart or our head; and after a moment's consideration, I added confidantly, "We may often trust the heart rather than the brain, especially about spiritual things. And God judges us not by what we do, but by what we desire to do; that is how, *we are justified by faith, not by works;* as for conventions I am too old now to watch my steps and count my

words. I intended only to share my spiritual hope with another, and God will not count it against me—nor will Mary."

This afternoon, April eleventh, ten years ago, I finished my dear Cromwell novel. What happy days I spent over it. The man's strong, sweet nature fed me spiritually, so that I was well and happy and of good courage all the year during which we walked together. It was indeed a veritable friendship and companionship. I wept when I wrote the two last words of the book—"Vale, Cromwell!" I had been frequently sensitive to his presence, and I had a scrupulous honor in portraying him, especially in his wonderful religious character, with strict and impartial judgment. Frequently after writing a scene in which he figured prominently, I turned to the chair at my side and asked, "Is that true? Was that how it happened? Did you feel as I say you felt?" And rarely did I miss the warrant I wanted. During the writing of this book, "The Lion's Whelp," I was singularly sensitive to spiritual

influences and I knew as soon as I entered my study whether Cromwell was present or not. The same experience in a measure followed me all through the writing of "Remember The Alamo." I "all but saw" General Sam Houston; but I had known this hero well, and his personality was still vivid in my memory. I used often to imagine how the spiritual world would all be moved to meet Cromwell at his coming; and surely Houston, when he went to it two hundred years later, would hasten to greet his soldier comrade; for both were Freedom's sons, and fought and won her battle.

IV

THE SPIRITUAL BODY

It lies around us like a cloud,
The world we do not see;
Yet the soft closing of an eye
May bring us there to be.
HARRIET B. STOWE.

THE next day my friend visited me early in the morning. "Amelia," she said, "you gave me some thoughts yesterday that will not rest and settle themselves. I suppose you wanted me to believe——"

"To consider," I corrected.

"Well, to consider the animal kingdom as

candidates for humanity, submerged in the human world, close to us, yet far from us—and then—what?"

"To consider whether the human world may not be surrounded and suffused by a spiritual world, very close to every one of us, and into which we are liable to be transferred at any hour. We know that every age has given us undeniable instances of visitations from that world."

"Such as——?"

"Dreams, visions, presence, signs and tokens —whispers only heard by the spiritual body within us."

"The spiritual body?"

"Yes, for we have a natural body, and we have a spiritual body—not we are going to have, we have already a spiritual body."

"Everyone?"

"Yes, though, alas! many never pay the least heed to it. The body though marvelously made is not the individual. It is the soul that makes a man—he himself and no other. We

all know that, though one with the body, we are quite distinct from the body."

"To be sure. A man loses a leg or an arm, and he is just the same man really. He feels and thinks and knows quite as much as if his body was perfect."

"And we know that we ourselves are superior to the body. We use it as our tool and servant—that is all. No one can by any possibility mistake his body for himself. It is not that you *have* a soul; you *are* a soul."

"Then if the soul is ourselves, we ought to know something about it. Yet how scanty our knowledge is, how uncertain and unsatisfying!"

"Because, Mary, none of our bodily senses can reach the soul. We can neither see nor touch it. We do not know its shape, any more than we know the shape of a thought or a wish or a hope or a fear.

"We are spirits clad in veils,
Man by man was never seen;
All our deep communing fails,
To remove the shadowy screen."

"Yet, Amelia, it takes possession of every part of our body, and moves it both to will and to do. How is it joined to the body?"

"Ah, Mary, where is the man or angel who can tell us! No surgeon's scalpel has ever found that point of contact. When two material things are joined together, we easily find the point of contact. We see the cable that fastens the ship to the pier, the traces that unite the horses to the carriage, but no eye ever saw the invisible bonds between soul and body, nor yet witnessed their sundering at death. We only know that when the soul went away, the man or woman went away also and left only dust behind."

"But the soul did not die?"

"Every soul that has ever lived, lives yet somewhere in the universe of God. St. Peter speaks of 'the spirits in prison, who had been disobedient when the long suffering of God waited in the days of Noah.' These innumerable souls, forcibly expelled by the deluge, were alive two thousand years afterwards, and

Christ preached to them. Oh, marvelous ministry!"

"There is another question, Amelia. What keeps the soul in the body? Does it always remain in the body while the body lives?"

"I think not. What of the mysterious state of dreaming when we are neither in the body nor out of it—a state it would be impossible to make anyone understand if they have never dreamed, and yet a very real condition to the dreamers?"

"Yes, I know. I have met my friends, both the dead and the living, in dreams, spoken to them, been reproved and comforted by them; but I never, never *met my own soul.* Did any one ever meet his own soul while dreaming?"

"That is a new question, Mary. Where did you bring it from? I will answer it by another. Would you like to meet your own soul?"

"No! No!"

"Why?"

"She would reproach me. She would say,

'O Mary! Mary! What tears and cares! What piteous angers! What cruel watches you have given me! You have led me through paths that have wearied me with watching,' and she might show me her feet, bruised and bleeding with following me among rocks and briers I had no business to be found wandering in. No! No, Amelia! I do not wish to meet my own soul even in dreams. Do you?"

"Not unless there was One beside me, who could plead for my pardon and grant it, too. O Mary, we can sin against our souls as easily as against our bodies, and that is the great sin. If we sin against the body, we suffer in the body; but who shall save us from the retribution that must atone for sins against the soul?"

"The One who has pledged Himself for the atonement of all sin—the sin of all the world. Is there any doubt or failure in that promise?"

"Not a shadow of doubt. He says that he is not willing *any* should perish, but that *all* should be saved."

"Do you think our souls love each other?"

"Yes, and hate each other also. That hate is one of the sins that will be punished in a future reincarnation. We sin against the body, when we maltreat it in any way and such a sin could well be punished in this life, but a sin against the soul! Who knows where it will end, seeing that the soul is immortal?"

"I feel sorry for my soul, Amelia. I have often treated it badly."

"Yet human souls are often very loving things. What efforts they ceaselessly make to reveal their misunderstood nature and to please both God and man. Muffled in flesh and masked behind a fleshly veil, they are not bodies within bodies, but a mounting essence which came from God and longs to return to him."

"Some souls must be very lonely, no one seems to love them, and they do not seem to love anyone."

"Souls have temperaments as well as bodies. Some souls are by nature lonely souls; and sometimes the souls they love are taken from them, and they cannot form new attachments.

There are many reasons why a soul may feel lonely in this life. If we knew intimately our own souls, if we could talk with them of the different lives we have spent together——"

"O Amelia! If we could! If we could!"

"If we could tell them how sorry we were to grieve or wrong them, if we could take counsel from them, if we could only love our own souls, as we love our own bodies, how happy we might be!"

"Then you think we have the same soul in every reincarnation?"

"Surely. Take into your heart, Mary, that wonderful book of Brierley's—'Studies of the Soul.' You borrowed it from me a month ago, and——"

"Dear! I have not yet found an hour to look at it. You know how much I have had to do lately."

"Well, Mary, Brierley says we are here in this life to grow our own soul through our trials, sorrows and lessons of many kinds. He thinks we can all grow a soul if we are willing

to pay the price. And, Mary, you know the price?"

"Yes, I know."

"To conquer the pride and vanity of this world, to put selfishness out of knowledge, to love God with all our heart, and our fellow creature as well as we possibly can. This is to be victorious, and it is the only pursuit that makes life full of interest, *even to its last hour.*"

"I wonder, Amelia, if people have always had souls?"

"Six thousand years ago, men in Egypt and Chaldea were keenly conscious of the relationship existing between themselves and God. And in the oldest books in the world, we find this feeling expressing itself not in fear, but in the grateful love of a child toward a father."

"We do the same today, Amelia. And Oh, how full of happiness we are when we can say 'Our Father' with all our heart and soul!"

"In such moments the two words are sufficient. They ask and obtain all they need. Then,

"The mortal soul, distrammeled of dim earth
Doth know herself immortal, and sits light
Upon her temporal perch."

There was a long significant silence; then my friend said, "I suppose you believe that there is a spiritual world in some way enveloping this human world?"

"Professor William James says, 'This world is enveloped in a larger world of some kind, of which at present we can form no idea.' It may be so."

"And that, as we have already a spiritual body, we may be here in preparation for that world of which at present we can form no idea? Is that so?"

"To become a spiritual being is the end of all our efforts. We must become fit for the spiritual world before we can enter it; but if we utterly neglect the spiritual body when we lose the natural body, what will become of us?"

"I dare not think."

"Listen, and I will read to you what one

brave man dared to write after investigating this question.

"If thou art base and earthly, then despair,
Thou art but mortal as the brute that falls;
Birds weave their nests, the lion finds a lair,
Man builds his halls.

"These are but coverts from earth's war and storm
Homes where our lesser lives take shape and breath;
But if no heavenly man has grown—*what form*
Clothes thee at death?"

"That is a terrible question. You should not have uttered it."

"I frequently ask it of myself. I wish to grow daily, to know constantly wherein I fail and succeed. Ask this question when you are alone with God, if you wish to answer it truly."

"Alone! Is not religion a rather lonely thing?"

"O Mary, when we seek God we know that God is seeking us, and who could feel lonely in those moments of tender vague mystery that sometimes bring us distinctly the feeling of His Presence? Then the soul clings to the Father

and Lover of Souls. There is a joy past utterance, a rest unspeakable, and

"Once drinking deep of that divinest anguish,
How could we taste the empty world again?"

"What I meant by religion being a lonely thing, is that people who are religious do not care to go out much. I mean they are not sociable. You know what I mean, Amelia."

"Yes, I know. Think a moment of this fact, that the most common thing in humanity is its isolation. We are in reality isolated beings. We are tried alone. We suffer and conquer alone. We die alone. All that is human fades and flits at that hour. Beyond all the passions common to humanity, there is in everyone a soul-life whose current flows on in solitary stillness. We change our habits, our tastes, even our convictions, but the soul in its own mysterious way moves on from phase to phase, from doubt to faith, from repose to activity. Only God, or godlike people, keep our souls in remembrance. 'Be not afraid,' said Christ, 'of those that kill the body, and after that have no

more that they can do.' So then, Mary, Christ regarded body and soul as quite separate.

"There is a beautiful Jewish tradition that Christ, standing by the dying bed of Joseph, said again, 'Be not afraid! Nothing of thee will perish!' In these compassionate words, he comforted his earthly father, and assured him of his immortality.

"That is a beautiful tradition. It recognizes both the human nature that feared, and the soul nature which was immortal. But after all, Joseph died alone. Christ could only give him blessed assurances. And when he came to his own death hour, he cried out at its forsaken loneliness. We must all tread that path alone."

"I don't think so," answered Mary cheerfully. "Weak, tired, heart-broken souls, and little children, will find some angelic Greatheart to carry them, and the strong joyful souls,

"Up to the golden citadel will fare,
And as they go their limbs grow full of might,
And One be waiting at the topmost stair,
One, whom they had not seen, but knew at sight."

And that morning we said no more. Mary went away full of quietness, and I sat still dreaming of the land where my home and my dear ones dwell, the husband of my youth, my sons and daughters, my good father and mother, and the many friends who have helped me in my lonely journey. And a great longing to depart and be with them filled my heart, until the door softly opened and my invalid daughter entered the room. Then at the smile on her patient innocent face all my longing for Heaven vanished and I wished for nothing and prayed for nothing but that God would let me live at her side while she lived, that I might fight the battle of life for her, and share what would indeed be her lonely suffering if I went away. Nay, how could it be Heaven for me, while it was earth for her? So close sits earth to Heaven! So far away and yet so near. Father and lover of souls, break not the ties formed out of thy divine love.

Our souls can apprehend the mortal fear,
The imploration of the Christ to save

THE SPIRITUAL BODY

When the last foe inexorably near
  Stands face to face with us this side the grave.

But Oh! what love and wonder shall divide
  Our first strange effort of eternal breath,
When crowned with victory, on the other side,
  We stand a moment *looking back on death.*

A. E. BARR.

V

YOUTH AND A GARDEN OF HERBS

It could not be more quiet; Peace is here,
Or nowhere; days unruffled by the gale
Of public news, or private; years that pass forgetfully.

* * * *

I do not despise the overweening hopes and follies of youth. If it started with the wisdom of age, what a world this would be! Should we have any love making? Any fine extravagances? Any money lending, or any friendship?

* * * *

A garden that was a little drama of wind and sunshine and scent.

COMMONLY I use a tinted paper to write on because it is more comfortable to the eyes, but there are certain days and certain sub-

jects that insist on white paper. It is not a fancy; it is a feeling just as positive as our love for a white dress on a sunny day. This exquisite morning at Cherry Croft among the highlands of the Hudson was preceded by a night so heavenly, I could not help wondering for whom these ancient splendors were prepared.

> For whom these silent, starry nights,
> And the serene gaze of the full moon?
> For whom these celestial beams,
> These perfumed airs,
> This verdure of the fields?
> For whom the many colored clouds,
> The gilded glimmering of twilight,
> The rainbow, and the meteors?

It cannot be only for man, for it is but meager notice and admiration he ever gives them. But the multitude of

> . . . spiritual creatures who walk the earth
> Unseen, both when we wake, and when we sleep,

they are delighted and rested and refreshed by their shadow and peace and perfume. Zechariah saw a splendid angel standing among some

myrtle trees, while angelic horsemen went to and fro in the happy earth, reporting, "Behold, all the earth sitteth still, and is at rest." I know a sweet soul who saw, in what she called a dream, an angel flying slowly over the mountains, with a lily on his breast. It is for the refreshment and pleasure of the angels the flowers are tinted and perfumed and the trees clothed with restful shadows. It is the angels, doubtless, who drop flower seeds in desolate places and make oases in the sandy deserts. Surely then a good soul will love flowers, love them too well to cut them off from their parent stem and carry them away from their companions whom perhaps they love dearly after their own fashion. Once when I was going to cut a full blown rose, a child asked me, "What will the little roses do?" and I dropped the scissors and looked at her. Her eyes were full of pity and they regarded me with a sad inquiry or remonstrance. Then I took her hand and walked away, leaving untouched the mother rose among the little roses.

The incident set me thinking. Had I any right to cut that rose from its home and thus doom it to a certain, languishing death? Dimly some words by Landor came to my memory, and I went to look for them. Here they are:

> It is and ever was my wish, and way,
> To let all flowers live freely, and all die
> Whene'er their genius bids their soul depart,
> Unto their kindred, in their native place.
> I never pluck the rose, the violet's head
> Hath shaken with my breath upon its banks,
> And not reproached me; the ever sacred cup
> Of the pure lily, hath, between my hands,
> Felt safe, unsoiled nor lost one grain of gold.

It was a very happy day to me. My year's work was lying finished on my desk, and as I went about my study putting in place the books and written notes that had been my guides through the stormy period I had been dwelling with Cromwell, I sang softly to myself; for I had not at that time quite lost my voice, and I could always bring from memory some sweet strain to tell my joy or sorrow. Today it was

a lovely old song about Spring, that the Reverend Mr. Punshon brought me one morning, when I was a happy girl of sixteen. It had a joyous melody to words that run thus:

Spring! Spring! Beautiful Spring!
Laden with glory and light you come,
With the leaf, and the bloom, and the butterfly's wing,
Making our earth a fairy home.

And to its charming melody I opened and closed drawers and portfolios and carefully put away the parcels of docketed papers I had been using. To me they were not common papers. They had advised and corrected me, made me change and reconsider, and in most cases I had followed their advice. And whatever we serve and obey, we love or ought to love, and I could not now put them in the wastebasket. Sometime someone will destroy them as useless but it will not be I.

So I sang and sided and tidied my study, and put every item of paraphernalia in its proper place. This method was the result of early training. My mother was inflexibly neat

and orderly, and I never saw a loose paper or a vagrant book in my father's study. Indeed, he frequently said to me, "A man or woman who is untidy or careless in their personal habits is not to be trusted in spiritual matters and will bear watching and perhaps reproof about their moral and mental life."

These may not be his exact words, but they contain the principle he inculcated—that physical untidiness and carelessness indicated an equally disordered spiritual, moral, and mental disposition. This lesson, begun in my babyhood, has ruled me to a great extent even to my eighty-fifth year and will rule my habits to the end. And it is an illustration of the value of parental teaching. A child trained up in the way he should go, will not depart from that way, if he live to be a hundred years old. In these days, this may be a broad saying, but in the main, it is a true one.

I was making a kind of holiday of this day of completion, and in the afternoon I was not sorry to see the son of a dear friend climbing

the mountain to visit me. He was going to Europe, and was full of young enthusiasms, hope and expectation, and above all of the joy of living. Now a person full of life has only to show himself, and if that abundant vitality is allied with good temper, it is irresistible. It is the great open secret of success and very often carries it over brains, because it includes a constant sense of *the now* with a faculty of making the best of it.

He spoke a little pathetically of the hard work of his last term, but when I heard in what it consisted, I had no particular pity for the ill-used student. I told him plainly I worked harder than he did, at least two or three hours longer, and that I found eight hours writing a very reasonable day's work; and did not want nor yet enjoy holidays. "The fact is, Harold," I continued, "that very few people indeed overwork themselves. If a man works hard, he likes to do so, either in a direct or indirect way."

He spoke then of the tendency of the youth

of the present day to be pessimistic and melancholy. "Why, madam," he said, "you are far more cheerful than most of the young people I know. This is really an unhappy epoch of life!"

"Nonsense!" I answered. "There are no more unhappy people now than there have always been; but I admit that a certain class talk more of their unhappiness. A great many can now write sonnets of sentimental melancholy and sell them to the magazines. A few years ago, if a person asked himself such a foolish question as, Is life worth living? he could not have turned his gloomy meditations into paying copy."

"You are over eighty, madam, and you are always cheerful; what is your great secret?" asked my friend.

"Reasonable good *work*. There is a very remarkable passage at the conclusion of the ninetieth Psalm: 'Establish thou the work of our hands upon us; yea, the work of our hands establish thou it.' Our feelings, hopes, dreams,

expectations and even our aspirations, will pass away, but *our work remains.* Through eternity what we have done will influence us."

"Would it not, madam, be a great boon, if when the mortal frame had arrived at its perfection—say at thirty years old—we could remain thirty, until we died?"

"No. Death would be hard to the majority, if they had to resign life, when life was at full tide. But when Death comes in old age, he comes, as to one who has had a busy, happy day comes the restful night. They are glad of it. They lie down tired and thankful for the peace and rest, and when they awake in the Land Very Far Off, they will be more than satisfied. Harold, those who spend their youth and middle life well, do not need to fear age. They will realize then, that death is dawn; that it is only the night which ushers in another life day."

"You make death a very interesting occurrence."

"Death imparts to life its most intense in-

terest, for we then do homage to that which is eternal within us."

"I remember four lines in one of Davenant's poems about death, that always seemed very fine to me."

"I should like to hear them."

"O harmless Death! Whom still the Valiant brave,
The Wise expect, the Sorrowful invite,
And all the Good embrace; who know the grave
The short, quick passage to Eternal Life.

"and I think, madam, your views of death must be the secret of happiness to age."

"Oh, no! The secret of happiness, as it refers to age, is this: Age must change hope for insight. Why not? Age is neighbor to Eternity. It is its privilege to dwell on the Delectable Mountains, and have glimpses of the Heavenly City to which it is traveling."

So we talked the happy day away, for if you will only lead a young man into his higher self, he will gladly follow. And we love those who take us into the finest atmosphere we can breathe. We spoke of the soul and its culti-

vation, and of life and its labor, and it was near midnight, when Harold said,

"I must leave you early in the morning. So I will go to bed now, and take a sleep."

"Is it a sleep?" I asked, looking intently into his face. And he hesitated a moment, and then answered,

"Perhaps—not"—and the grave smile and slight nod of his head showed me he understood.

The next morning my friend went away, and I could not console myself with writing, for my eyes were swollen and misty with overwork, so I went into the garden to watch the gardener planting and sowing. Not among the flowers, but into that humbler patch where grow the bulbs and leaves which give a more human and idyllic character to our fleshly meals. To my mind, these green rows and beds are full of romance. They have the classic flavor of Greek and Roman gardens and of lands toward sunrising. He was planting potatoes, our commonest vegetable, yet its fam-

ily history carries us into the faraway magical traditions of the Old World. "Thomas," I said, "do you know that the potato is a near relative of the deadly nightshade, the mysterious mandrake, the apple of Sodom, and the dangerous bittersweet with its wicked lilac flowers full of poison? Indeed, Thomas," I added, "the whole potato family is one with which we associate poisoning and witchcraft and other wicked practices."

"I'm believing nothing of the kind, ma'am," replied Thomas. "There isn't a more decent respectable root growing than the Irish potato."

Then I told him the history of all our common vegetables, and he listened eagerly, though he dissented frequently, from his own personal experience, he said, having planted and eaten them for nearly fifty years. Still he was very much interested, and eager for information, though disposed to qualify, if not to positively contradict all my statements. His mood did me good. I like to be challenged, and I found

my headache and eyestrain growing better, as I insistently instructed him.

In the afternoon Mrs. Gray called to talk with me about her garden which is the delight of her aging years. Flower lore of all kinds interested her far more than science or progress; more even than the questions of suffrage or servants or any other subject supposed to be the special pleasure and obligation of women.

She had a new project, and since I had suggested it, she was sure I would help her to carry it out.

"I am going to make an herb garden," she said excitedly. "I have written to a man in New York who says it is just the thing for an old lady to potter with. 'Potter with!' That is his definition of an old lady's gardening; but I will show him! You shall see! Just tell me what herbs to order, and I will write for them at once. First——"

"Basil," I answered. "It has a peculiar character, but I dare say you can manage it. I remember a fine herb garden in Yorkshire,

and its mistress made basil head and front of it."

"Why?"

"Because she was as contradictious in temper as basil. 'You must scold and abuse basil all the time you are sowing it,' she said to me, 'or it will not grow, and you must tread the soil, when you have sown it, under your feet and forbid it to grow; then, because its temper is so passionately contradictious, it will outgrow everything round it.'"

"Oh, delightful! I shall enjoy the sowing of basil. It suits my own temper precisely. We shall see whether basil or I will conquer! But are you telling me a truth or a fancy—something poetical you know?"

"I cannot vouch for dead generations, but a hundred years ago a pot of basil was a complimentary gift to any lady."

"Do you see the compliment, Mrs. Barr?"

"No—but it might be a covert sarcasm."

"Precisely. There are, of course, women who do best what they are forbidden to do. I

have felt that way myself. Poor Charles often asks me to do the very thing he does not want me to do. I found him out the first month we were married—but I never told him so. I knew better. Well, after basil, what next?"

"Let us say rue,

"sour herb of grace
Rue even for ruth."

"That does not sound nice."

"Blame Shakespeare then. He said the words, and he makes rue grow where a wronged queen had dropped a tear."

"Is there anything nice about rue?"

"It has a fine medical record."

"One does not care much for medical records. Poetry and history are different. I like a plant or a flower to have a good personal record. I suppose one might say 'personal' of a plant?"

"Yes—in a way. It has a body, and for aught we know, it has a soul suitable to that body. It has its own properties, its own taste, color, scent, and its own moral character."

"To be sure. Some plants are very good for men; some poison them, and I suppose, if they have a moral nature, they might have a soul."

"I have read in many books, and heard from many people, the belief that the scent of plants and flowers is their soul. If you cut them, you know as their scent departs, their life goes with it."

"Tell me something about rue's character. Has it any peculiarities or not? If it has, are they good or bad?"

"Both. It is said to prevent headache, and artists and carvers chewed its leaves to preserve their sight. Even in the middle of the seventeenth century, Milton makes the angel Michael purge Adam's eyes with euphrasy and rue, in order that he might see down the centuries of time."

"Then both Shakespeare and Milton name it! I must remember that. If the ignorant do not notice it, I can remind them of its honorable mention by very superior people. I hope there is nothing very bad about rue."

"Only that it was anciently believed that, to have any value, rue must be stolen from somebody's garden."

"I don't believe that. Do you?"

"I believe many things I can offer no reason for believing. We all do."

"I suppose so. Well, rue is quite respectable enough for my garden."

"Respectable! Why, it has even a sacred character. In the Middle Ages, the priests always sprinkled holy water with a spray of rue."

"How interesting! Certainly I must have some rue."

"And you must remember the familiar three lines of *Perdita* in the 'Winter's Tale':

> "For you there's rosemary and rue, these keep
> Seeming and savor all the winter long.
> Grace and remembrance be with you both."

"I remember them very well. I once had a lovely china bowl inscribed with those very lines. It got broken. I was awfully sorry—servants are so careless. I suppose I must have rosemary, too?"

"You would hardly have an herb garden without Rosemary. And it will delight to grow in your garden by the sea. Rosemary loves the sea. It likes to be wet with its spray. Its name 'Rosemary, dew of the sea,' will tell you that."

"Precisely! Dew of the sea! How pretty and so easy to remember!"

"It ought also to be a great favorite with married ladies, for if rosemary grows in the garden, the wife rules in the house."

"Do you believe that?"

"I like to believe it. A sprig of rosemary is a lovely, fragrant scepter, and how can we tell what occult power is hidden in a sprig of rosemary? Bees are passionately fond of it."

"I should not think of bees. I love honey, but bees would buzz and sting and spoil my garden."

"Then you must omit thyme, for I think God made thyme that we might have delicious honey. When I was a girl, thyme was often used instead of boxwood to make borders for flower

beds. It is now an old fashion, and I can never think of it apart from some drowsy, quaint, old English garden. The custom would bear transplanting here, for if the borders are kept trimly cut, nothing can be fairer to the sight or sweeter to the smell."

"I am going to have a border of thyme. That is positive. And I suppose I must also have mint, though it is so common and not quite respectable—but I will put it in a corner."

I smiled, and she added something about a drink made from it, but she quickly reconciled herself to its presence by the reflection that it was not a fashionable drink now, and asked, "Are there any more herbs you can recommend?" I suggested sage, saffron, wormwood and hyssop. She asked if I knew whether sage had any romantic antecedents. "It is such a common herb," she said. "I think there is a big bed of sage in my garden now. I don't know what for. We don't use it."

"You could hardly roast a goose without it."

"During the war of 1860, men who could get

no tobacco and were unbearably irritable, smoked dried sage leaves with a good result to their feelings. I have seen in frontier settlements sage tea often drunk in preference to 'store' tea which was a kind of luxury, and in Cumberland and many other English counties finely chopped sage is mixed with cheese. Thus Gay writes

"Marbled with sage, the hard'ning cheese she pressed.

And many a time in my own youth, I have eaten finely chopped sage baked between rich pastry, and enjoyed it."

"Why, every little herb seems to have a story."

"Wonderful stories unite themselves with the commonest herbs and flowers, and

". . . the meanest flower that blows can give
Thoughts that do often lie too deep for tears.

"For instance the hyssop that springeth out of the wall, has been used for the highest purposes and hallowed by the most solemn and exalted sorrows."

"Yes, dear, I have heard of the hyssop, and I will certainly get some. It is named in the Bible, I think."

"Yes, the Bible has special observances for the hyssop in cleansing unholy or unclean places, and David's cry of self-abasement, 'Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean,' was the type of that great atonement offered for the sins of the world. Then a sponge filled with vinegar was lifted upon hyssop to the lips of the Lamb of God, completing that stupendous sacrifice."

"It is wonderful—wonderful! Just common herbs! Just common herbs! full of such sacred thoughts! Certainly, dear, I shall make an herb garden, and I will find out all there is to learn about herbs, and when I walk in my garden, I shall feel a great joy in it. I am going to tell John all you have told me and ask him to help me."

"Then you will have a double pleasure, and I will lend you some books that will tell you about herbs and flowers and the wonderful

stories they hold and tell from generation to generation."

Here we parted, and my friend went away full of a new hope and feeling every hour wasted till she could begin to realize her ideas. Her handclasp was firmer, her eyes brighter. She had something to do tomorrow. She was eager for companionship in it, and I was glad she was going to seek her husband's help and advice. If he would join her, I knew what a pleasant corner would grow to beauty this summer in their garden by the sea and how happy it would make them.

We had talked long, for I have only given the outlines of our conversation, and when I had watched her carriage out of sight, I gladly sat down to rest awhile. It was many years since I had talked on this subject, and I could hardly have expected to remember nearly as much as came easily back to me.

But the thought that moved me most of all was the wonderful union between the commonest and the loftiest things. The meanest exis-

tence, if only examined, touches illimitable interests; the saddest mortal may be near to eternal felicity; the weakest have on their side inexhaustible strength. Nothing is common or unclean, and the weed or flower on which we tread may ally itself with hoary civilizations and with romance and poetry that has neither beginning nor end.

Yes, the older I grow, the more certain I am that life is mysteriously sacred and radiant. It may be allied with earthly things which we regard with contempt or indifference, but it is and always has been exalted above all that ministers to it.

VI

THUS RUNS THE WORLD AWAY

Declining into old age calmly as the setting of the constellations.

A woman of the daytime who wanted light everywhere. Always under arms, and on the march in the battle of life. Often bruised, weary, harassed—often full of joy and triumph over adverse circumstances. Always trusting in God!

THE summer came and went pleasantly away. I was writing "Thyra Varrick," a story in a certain way after my own heart, for it dealt with the heroic and romantic material of the last brilliant blunder of the royal

Stuarts and kept me in spirit in Orkney and the Scotch Highlands, never too far away from the great North Sea to feel the elixir of its winds and to hear the roaring music of its billows. I loved the people I had to deal with, except the Stuart, and for my antipathy to the Stuarts, I had good and sufficient family reasons.

I sat in my high tower and saw the present-day world from a height and a distance that revealed none of its faults—the boats on the Hudson, the carriages full of happy people passing occasionally down the mountain, the trains in the distance racing across the valley, the murmur of faint noises from the village below me, were all too far off to annoy. They only gave me a sense of companionship busy enough on its own account not to interfere with my business.

Day after day had slipped away, and the autumn was over all the land. I sat in the afternoons and let the gusty wind blow the fallen leaves to my feet, and I lifted one and

another of them and read what was written there. For I found in their wrinkled, faded faces many dear memories I could not have read in any other language. They held ghost stories of lost loves and lost hopes and vanished days. Let no one despise such tokens; there is a fundamental religiousness in them. Oh, the multitude of preachers in Nature's temple is always great and if one is dumb to us, we can easily find another with a song or a story or a sermon in it. The oak and the pine and the laurel leaves are to me palimpsests written not twice but twenty times over. I have met these trees everywhere that I have wandered or dwelt, and a great many important events in my life happened in their pleasant shadows. Sixty years ago, I found a bird's nest in a lilac bush, and the song and the scent of it are in my memory yet.

So I sat that still November afternoon and as I watched Thomas gathering the apples, I talked with the fallen leaves. And the end of all our communing was this: We all do fade as

a leaf. In the words, however, there was not a hint of fear or sorrow. Let us fade, let us feel that the doom of mortality is on us! Death is the gate of life. We shall recover far more than we have lost. God will then count up the salvage of our misfortunes and mistakes, and give us what eternity owes us, *for life is full of sorrows and sufferings that earth has no compensations for.* Indeed, there has often in happier moments come to me, a belief that compensation, far more than condemnation, is waiting for those who have done their best even if their best is very near failure.

A few days after the apples were gathered, there was a flurry of snow, and I began to think about winter quarters, and in a couple of weeks my study chair was empty, the house closed, and Alice and I were in our old rooms at the Fifth Avenue Hotel. Many of my friends were already there, and I found considerable excitement and controversy concerning the election. Politics I do not meddle with, but I liked to listen to the polite quarreling in prog-

ress. Suddenly a splendid-looking old gentleman entered the green parlor in which we were sitting. It was Dr. D., an eloquent preacher and a scholar of great distinction, especially in Egyptology, in which department he had a high and wide reputation.

I immediately asked him to settle the dispute, and he sat down among us and asked what we were arguing about.

A little old woman from Maine answered the question. "Doctor," she said, "I have been looking forward to hearing some fine sermons in New York, and I went last Sabbath to Dr. Z.'s church. I was terribly disappointed and I feel that I have a right to complain of the sermon which I heard. My companions doubt it."

"He is considered a notably fine preacher, madam. I go to hear him very constantly."

"I thought at least he would preach from the Bible."

"Certainly he would. He always does."

"He read something from a newspaper and

then began to talk about the election and a man's duty to himself and his country. I suppose he was licensed to preach 'Christ and Him crucified.' I do not believe I heard the name of Christ once. Do you think he was right?"

"Indeed, madam, I can not think he was wrong."

"Why he prayed about the election!"

"Indeed, he did, I heard him. I thought it a prayer in due season."

"In church! On Sunday morning! It was not right!"

"My dear madam——"

"I think it was quite profane!"

"Not more so than saying grace before meals or putting *Dei Gratia* on coins or taking the most solemn oaths in courts of justice. These things proclaim the sacredness of life on its domestic and social side. The Doctor believed himself to be performing a solemn duty to his congregation, for the men present were all probable voters in the coming important election, and he intended to make them feel that

the vote given conscientiously is a religious act."

"Oh-h!"

It was the beginning of a long and very earnest discussion, and the women gradually left the room. I soon followed their example, for if I had had any interest in the subject, Dr. D.'s few words had satisfied me that even politics were not so unclean as to be beyond praying for. Yet I felt a strong liking for the little Maine woman who had stood so firmly for the honor of God, as she understood it.

During the winter we learned to know and to love each other; and were often together, for she proved to be one of those simple, clear souls who have never fallen from that grace of God vouchsafed to children. She was little and slender, weighing less than one hundred pounds, yet she had lived through and lived down great and strange sorrow.

One day I asked her *how* she had done it, and she answered quietly, "As a soldier takes a shot. Not my business to ask *why* or *what*

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for. It came while I was doing my duty. I worked on and God helped me." And I felt awed and humbled before her childlike love for God and her inflexible faith in Him.

She proved to be four years older than myself, and I asked her if she had "come all the way from Bangor alone."

"Yes. Why not?" she answered. "Everyone was kind to me. Men do not forget that they have had a mother. Many were so gentle and helpful that I knew they were thinking of her."

She was eight weeks in the hotel, and she spent much of her time with Alice. Each had their needle and thread, but their talk was not of this world or this life. On the whole she was retiring and reticent, yet everyone was her friend. She was rich, but I never heard her name money; she was dainty in her clothing, but not extravagant. She was well-bred and had traveled far, but she never spoke of what she had seen or heard. Like a song in the night she came, and went. The day she left,

when the rest of us met in the parlors, someone would say softly,

"She went away this morning," and the answer was sure to be,

"She was a beautiful old lady!" There was no need to speak her name.

Mrs. P. talked to me of her in the evening. "It was good to be with her," she said. "Why are such old ladies so rare?"

"Oh," I answered, "they are not rare, but such women do not prowl about the gay places of the world. They are found in the sanctuary of the home. There the young go with their griefs, and the middle-aged with their perplexities and anxieties, and none go away without counsel and comfort. For to them, all the fountains of life have been unsealed, and they are almost certain to be of that noble band who were 'born for adversity,' by this token, that they have conquered it."

"It is not true—is it?—that old age is a return to childhood or dotage?"

"It is extremely false," I answered. "Those,

certainly, who in their prime neither nourished their spiritual nature nor cultivated their understanding, must expect to sink into dotage as their unlovely old age approaches. But to those who fortify physical strength with spiritual strength and keep all of Life's strings in use and practice, Time is the gentlest of destroyers to the body, while upon our nobler nature he lays a consecrating finger, until there are

> "No fears to beat away, no strife to heal,
> The past unsighed for, and the future sure.

"Dotage in old age! Blessed is the man or woman who so lives that they can enjoy tarrying in the house of old age!"

"I think men feel the limitations of age worse than women."

"You do not say that from your own experience?"

"No, indeed," and she smiled and looked toward her husband standing in the midst of a group of his admirers. "He never speaks of growing old. I suppose he never thinks of it.

Whether the crowd is young or old, he steps with the foremost. I hope he will always feel young. Old men always seem so lost and uncomfortable."

"An old man's woes count double," I said. "This is the truth."

The Fifth Avenue Hotel in its late days had a great many old guests, both men and women, but the number of old men seemed excessive. Several had gone there when it was first opened; some had married and taken their wives there and brought up a family in its pleasant rooms; and while I was a guest, a young lady born there, was married there, and finally arranged her home in its plentiful comfort. The old women blended with the usual company in the parlors, and never seemed out of place. The old men were always in isolated tolerance. They sat alone reading the morning paper; they disappeared during the day, and slipped into their places at dinner-time, without greetings. I was some years in the hotel before I knew their names. There

seemed to be nothing remarkable about any of them.

Other old men came in surrounded by women and children, and generally they appeared happy. The women talked and laughed with them, the children bullied or contradicted them, the waiters made a fuss over them, and the general public regarded them as members of life in good and full standing. They sat down in the parlors, talked with the company they found there, and in no way tried to efface themselves.

It was for the lonely old bachelors, slipping unobtrusively about the house, that I felt sorry. I wondered what they did with themselves from nine in the morning to six at night, and in a rare moment of confidence I was told that they went to one of their clubs.

"And they can do as they wish there?" I asked.

"Not exactly," was the answer. "The young men of the club control things as a rule, and they just tolerate the old men. They get

courtesy, but not confidence. The atmosphere of a young man is eager, passionate, impatient; that of an old man slow, torpid, prosy. He wants to tell strange or funny stories; the young man sees nothing in them, for his point of view is totally different. The old man is not welcome in any little group of young men. Something hereditary and instinctive makes the young pay a formal respect to the old, and they say a word about the weather, or at least bow as they pass him."

"That is, if men do bow now to either age or beauty," I said. "It appears to me that they have ceased the beautiful act of bowing to women, and if so, will they yet bow to men? I doubt it."

From all I heard about men's clubs I should not suppose them to be pleasant places for old men, and I said to my informant, "Why do not men over sixty found an old man's club? Then they could have things just as they wanted them. They would not bore each other with their old fishing or sporting stories, their ad-

ventures in Europe or Asia, or their sighing innuendo tales of the women they have loved and slighted. An old man's club could cater to all the wants and hobbies and ailments of old age, and on their own ground and in their own quarters youth could not snub them with short answers or formal courtesies."

"The great difficulty is, that men are constitutionally less able to adapt themselves to changed conditions than women are," was the answer. "Men will not believe they are getting old. Bald heads and rheumatism tell them so in the most obvious and logical manner, but they all know young men who are bald at twenty, and as for rheumatism, even school children have touches of it these days. But," said my informant, "we must remember that the average old club man is not an average man. He is long past that point."

"I hardly understand you."

"I will give you an example. My father's schoolfellow and friend began life with high ideals and great hopes. He loved a beautiful

girl, but the course of love went wrong and she married someone else. He consoled himself with making money and he grew to like it. He married a rich woman, and he became proud of his position and proud of his purse. Yet when all courted and envied him, he often remembered how in his youth he had dreamed of greater things and nobler things than money-making and social honor.

"His wife died, his sons married, he broke up his home, and lived between his hotel and his club. There were far richer men in the club he chose—men of fine education, travel and experience. He had nothing to talk about but markets and railways and financial panics, and his knowledge was old as himself and out of date and influence. He was as uninteresting and as useless as last year's almanac. He felt outworn. Nobody wanted him. He became silent and unresponsive and thought constantly of his youth and of the lofty ideals and noble plans that had then filled his heart. And these remembrances always ended in a sigh. If he

is saved, it will be that sigh that saves him. He is an average club man, but not an average man. What would you propose for the relief of such men?"

"A club house of their own. If they would only make a hobby of it, they would beat the other club houses hollow. Their riches could make it a monumental expression of all they preferred. There could be rooms of lotus-like repose and languorous peace and sleep; and rooms full of books for men who had once loved books. There could be music rooms and rooms for 'the ball' of many kinds; and athletic rooms——"

"Athletics!"

"Certainly. Some of the best golf-players on St. Andrew's field, when I was on it last, were men over seventy—big brawny men who lived up to the motto of St. Andrew, and sent their ball every time 'far and sure.' There are plenty of good golfers who have counted three score and ten in New York. There ought to be more. Somewhere in the city lives a man

called Thomas Davenant, an old Cumberland shepherd. He must be eighty, but I will warrant you that, as a wrestler, he could now throw any young man neatly over his shoulder."

"Have you seen him do it?"

"No; but I have seen dozens like him do it. There is no need for old men to stop active games and take to chess and backgammon. If a man amused himself with the piano when he was fifty, why stop when he is sixty or seventy? I have played since I was five years old and I play a good deal now that I am eighty-five, and I play far better than I did at five. If a man likes painting, let him have a studio. If he wants to write a treatise, give him a pen and ink and a quiet room. You think I am joking. I am in dead earnest. Who can tell how much the world loses in every way by this superstition concerning the inefficiency of age, It is a fallacy. If old men and their wives went to some unplanted place, whose locality they were allowed to choose, they would soon build

up a great city, and govern that city so wisely that it would be an object lesson to the builders of cities all over the country."

"If you could inspire old men with your own optimism and hope! The old cannot hope."

"That is nonsense," I answered. "If the old can remember, they can hope. If they can think of the past, they can think of the future."

"You would make me believe that age is to be desired, yet you always hear the old wishing they were young again."

"Perhaps, if they have been idle and dissolute and have wasted their youth and want their opportunity over. They will not get it in this reincarnation."

"Well, time is short."

"Most people seem to have more than they know what to do with. Many spend their lives in doing nothing, or in doing nothing to any good purpose or in doing nothing that they ought to do. They are always complaining

that our days are few and acting as if there were no end to them."

"I have detained you from some duty, I fear."

"No. I should have placed duty before anything else. I can easily overtake myself, and if our talk causes you to be a little kind and patient with the old men among whom you dwell, I shall have done a very kind and pressing duty. For there is a painful forlornness about old men. They are with us but not of us, they are lonely with the young, they can form no new friendships, and they are willing to be gone."

"And you are an old woman that say this?"

"Yes. I passed my three score and ten last March, and this year I have written 'The Lion's Whelp' and 'Thyra Varrick' and many short articles on various topics. My health and strength are quite normal. It is even below that of some women I know, and doubtless below that of a multitude of old men. They are actually able to do more than I have done."

"Why, then, do they not do it?"

"They do not need the pecuniary results. Other old men, when rich enough, have retired, and they have been brought up to do as others do. They think they will like doing nothing. They have an idea of building a finer country home than A or B and of showing the world in general how gardens should be laid out. Motives are many and simple. They look so attractive. Men are led away from the business life they know and understand, and they grow weary and bewildered in a new life that soon loses all interest for them. Then when the domestic changes arrive that are certain to come, they lose the grip of both lives and drift like a stray leaf on some idle backwater of life. There is no need for this. Let them keep the place they have honorably won. Why should they retire? Their age gives dignity to their business, their experience gives it solidity. If they only sat in their office and read the returns their business would gain in every good way by their presence."

"And suppose they had no desire to do so? What then?"

"Oh," I said, "if men are like that, let them fling themselves heart and soul into some healthy, reasonable hobby."

"Such as——?"

"I cannot begin on hobbies now. We can take that subject later. My work is getting impatient. I feel it calling me."

"Wait a moment. Is there no natural provision against the loneliness of old age?"

"Not for the childless. It is through our children we partake of the youth of the world. It is children that keep the world young and the old, even the old, from aging. Christ came to us as a little child who is stronger than a strong man. Christ's Kingdom comes to us from the cradle, and from a cradle comes the salvation of many a man and woman. The bachelor has put himself out of this zone of merciful amelioration. I am not pitying the old men who have, or who have had, wives and children. Every chamber in their hearts is

filled. There are no dark lonely rooms in it. It is the old bachelors, the wifeless, childless and generally friendless old bachelors, that need the kind word, the little attentions, the half-hour's complimentary conversation, most of all."

"Then I should come in for a trifle of your sympathy."

"Have I not just paid something on this debt?"

"To be sure, and thank you!"

Then we parted, and I went to my rooms and tried to overtake myself. The old know, or ought to know, that this feat is seldom possible. The young are learning the lesson. Between six and eight, the character of any day of mine is settled; others may advance the hour to nine or ten, but the fact remains the same. Some troublesome fate, with nothing particular to invite attention, broke up my hours into shreds of minutes and quarters. By four o'clock I had exhausted whatever of serenity and complaisance my interrupted work had left me, and

I put aside my manuscript with the aggravating reflection that I should probably throw it away and do it all over again tomorrow.

I did not go down to dinner. In spite of the excellent advice I was constantly offering my restless, exhausted nerves, I was unpleasantly conscious of my shortcomings. The quality and quantity of my work was a disappointment. I felt that I had not succeeded in making others feel and see as I did; and *it is our inabilities that irritate us.* We may assure ourselves of this great truth in nearly every case of ordinary failure. Had I been able in spite of all arrests and interruptions to logically and impressively carry out my argument, I should have laughed at what the various troublers did to me; but I had not been able to do what I intended to do. The sight of the ineffectual paper and pencils annoyed me. I slipped them into a drawer and ordered my dinner to be brought upstairs to me. By which my reader may see that the English proverb of "a bit of something good to eat isn't a half-bad comforter" still held

sway over me. Indeed, my whole experience convinces me that the highest depends on the lowest, and that if I forget my "bit of something good to eat," I cannot creditably offer the public the bit of something good to read.

The next day I had quite lost memory of my interference with old bachelors, but in the afternoon I received the following note:

DEAR MRS. BARR:

I was telling a fellow-sufferer last night about our conversation, and he gave me the enclosed clipping from *The Strand Magazine:*

"One of the most remarkable clubs of modern times has its headquarters in Alameda, California. It is called the Old Men's Singing Club, no one being admitted to it who has not the gift of song, and who has not passed his sixty-fifth year. The club has one hundred and one members with an aggregate age of six thousand six hundred and sixty-six years. After a year of practice of the music of the old days, they gave a concert for the benefit of the poor of Alameda, which gained fame for the club in a single night. The only lady artist at this concert was the Señora Benina Barone, aged one hundred and three years, who danced and sung 'La Tolla.'"

This incident appeared to close the proposi-

tion concerning special clubs for old men decidedly in my favor, and I did not think it my duty to pursue the subject further. The sower goes forth to sow; that is his part. He knows not whether the seed will perish, or bring forth a hundredfold.

VII

SLEEP AND PRAYER

Sleep leaves a door on hinge,
Whence the Soul ere our flesh suspect,
Is off and away.

BROWNING.

Her Soul kept up too much light
Under her eyelids for the night.

Prayer throws the soul on God, and unperplexed
Seeking, shall find Him.

THE next week I was unusually busy. I was writing two New Year's articles, called "A Fresh Start," and "Turning Over a New Leaf." I was at several public literary

functions, and I took a party of ladies and gentlemen from the hotel to a meeting at the Bowery Mission. At the end of the week I found myself tired and not able to sleep. Now sleeplessness is said to be the great sin of old age. I think at any age it is a sin to become so mentally active as to be unable to keep quiet and go to sleep—to have so much light under your closed eyelids, that you cannot find the dark.

That was exactly how I felt after a very exciting day, the eighth of its kind. I was not ill. I had no headache, but I could not be quiet and I could not stop thinking and planning. I had frequently had such "turns" and I dare say a multitude of old men and old women will know what I mean. I made a prolonged and honest endeavor to go to sleep, but only increased the nervous restlessness that troubled me.

Then I got up again. I put on a warm double-gown, drew a large, comfortable chair to the window, which looked on Twenty-third

Street, and as I did these things, I talked to myself very plainly. "You have decided to lie awake tonight, Amelia," I said. "Very well, I shall make myself comfortable without you, for if I cannot sleep, I can think, which is more interesting."

I was instantly reminded that I was "too tired to think."

"Yes," I answered, "I am if I go on thinking about the same things I have been worrying over for a week. But I shall give myself a brand new subject, and a new subject will be just as restful as a sleep. Take your time, Amelia. I am going to be quite happy." But I knew very well I was likely to have what Mr. Charles Collins calls, "the bad night candid"—that is, a night when you not only cannot sleep, but also know it is useless to try. Following my usual plan, I sent my thoughts back and backward to the gray fathers of the Hebrew world, and they stayed a few moments with Jacob asleep in the desert with his head on a pillow of stone and a dream of angels in his

soul, remembering at the same moment what a wondrous dreamer Joseph, the son of Jacob, was, and adding other incidents to these two facts—which my readers may do for themselves when the first night wakefulness gives them leisure—I fell upon the Psalms, so full of beautiful allusions, choosing instantly from among them that one half line which for comprehensiveness and comfort cannot be matched in all literature: "He giveth His beloved sleep." And there will be few, if any, who cannot recall some instance of this God-sent sleep, when it meant life to the sleeper or strength and courage to the broken-hearted. For not infrequently this blessed gift of sleep contains *the dream,* which is the walking of God through sleep, and the promise that the soul knows will never be broken.

It would be a good thing for the wakeful to follow the soft goings of sleep through the restless, turbulent Hebrew world, which yet, after all its vicissitudes and wanderings, is still prophetic in its slumbers, and is still looking for

the blessing which God ratified to their Father Abraham in a dreaming sleep.

I turned from the Hebrews to the Greeks, and a few minutes' thought inclined me to believe they were not acquainted with insomnia. They came to my recollection like beautiful youths, living much in the open air, gay and full of cheerful interests. Doubtless they generally regarded sleep as the agreeable occupation of free men in the summer noons, when they deserted the marble porticoes to go and lie on the grass within the sound of softly going waters and the murmur of bees among the lime-trees. I dare say their poets have all something to say about sleep, and old classical scholars can doubtless inform themselves where such passages can be found. I can only remind them of the speech of Hera in the fourteenth book of the Iliad: "Sleep! King of all gods and of all mortals, hearken now to my word; and if ever before thou didst listen, obey me now." In this invocation Sleep is represented as a young god, the lover of the fairest

of the Graces. Hera goes to seek his aid, and finds him wandering through the sleeping town of Lemnos. The face of Sleep is described as beautiful, innocent and drowsy, and the soft, noiseless wings of a night bird are fitted to his head.

Wakefulness would be a natural complaint in the feverish fighting life of the Hebrews; there would be fewer reasons for it among the happy-tempered Greeks, always running after some new thing. The impression the Athenian Greek leaves us is that of careless, joyous youth. The Jews were *always men.* They make their first appearance on the pages of Genesis as fighting men. Wakefulness is not a quality of youth; it haunts the last years of men and women who have lived life through every sense, or it is the miserable companion of the pains and anxieties of some more unfortunate.

The English race have always been great sleepers and great dreamers. It would be tedious to refer to Shakespeare's frequent allusions

to these facts, and Wordsworth's few pregnant lines are here quoted because they make life begin with a sleep, which is to be a law of our earthly existence, till it ends in the great sleep, the long sleep, of Death:

> Our birth is but a sleep and a forgetting;
> The soul that rises with us, our Life's Star,
> Hath had elsewhere its setting,
> And cometh from afar.
> Not in entire forgetfulness,
> And not in utter darkness,
> But trailing clouds of glory do we come
> From God who is our home.

Wordsworth also wrote a sonnet to sleep, very like the wise practical man he was, for he tells us all the methods he has used to summon sleep, and adds that he is "lying awake, nervously watching for the moment when the birds will disturb him with their intolerable songs." There is also a verse in some Greek anthology, where a poet complains that he would sleep and forget his grief:

> If twittering swallows would but let me be,
> Nor dart below my eaves with maddening cheep.

I quote these lines for their antique truthfulness. Do not a great many of us suffer every morning from the same "maddening cheep?"

Mr. Coleridge has said many beautiful things about sleep; for instance, the Ancient Mariner's blessing on sleep:

> O Sleep it is a gentle thing,
> Beloved from pole to pole;
> To Mary Queen the praise be given,
> She sent the bessed sleep from heaven,
> That slid into my soul.
> I moved, and could not feel my limbs,
> I was so light—almost
> I thought that I had died in sleep,
> And was a blessed ghost.

Coleridge has, however, four words in some verses on the pains of sleep, that has an epic breadth of meaning, and which it is easy to house in memory, "Sleep the wide blessing!"

From Wordsworth and Coleridge to Beddoe's Dream Pedlary is a long step, but I took it without thought or care of its relevancy and with a smile asked myself:

> If there were dreams to sell,
> What would you buy?

If there were dreams to sell,
And the crier rang the bell,
What would you buy?

It sounded like something I had once heard when I was asleep; and in some queer way, and without any help from me, allied itself with four lines of Sydney Dobell's drowsy, monotonous music, so that I found myself softly whispering in the quiet room:

. . . On the margin grey,
'Twixt the souls night and day,
Singing Awake! Away!

Such thoughts were but a mental recreation. They passed the time, but they did not put me to sleep. I really do not know how it came that I found myself with the Sailor of the Sea of Galilee, who was "in the hinder part of the ship, asleep on a pillow." And the boat was full of water and all lives were in jeopardy. I was well acquainted with an open boat in a raging sea and I could see and feel everything that was going on. Andrew, being a prudent, careful man (for he only when Christ fed the

five thousand knew where the loaves and fishes were) would likely be at the wheel; and Peter would be impetuously giving orders and reefing the sails; and the rest rowing or bailing out the water, and it would likely be John who went to Christ and said, "Master, carest thou not that we perish?"

"And Christ arose and rebuked the wind, and said unto the sea: Peace be still. And the wind ceased, and there was a great calm.

"And he said unto them: Why are you so fearful? How is it that ye have no faith?"

I had a moment's impatience with men toiling in rowing, and Christ in their boat. Did they not know, even if he was asleep, that he was holding the rudder? Why did they not call Christ as soon as the wind began to rise? Why did they wait until they were perishing?

I could have answered these questions, but I did not like to do so. I had done the same thing too often. I had toiled in rowing more than once, till my boat was likely to go down,

and not till then had I gone in distress to Christ and cried: "Master, carest thou not if I perish?" I, too, had heard the loving reproach of the question, "Why are you so fearful? How is it you have no faith?" And it must have been just here that I fell asleep, for I remember nothing afterward until I was awakened by the clock striking two.

Then I stirred in my chair and felt suddenly cold. Turning to look at the fire, I saw it was needing fuel, and I rose and threw on it the coal always left on the hearth for that purpose. For until the last day of its existence the Fifth Avenue Hotel warmed its private parlors by the open grate. And this simple feature added wonderfully to its popularity, for it gave a touch of home to the public life nothing else could have done.

As I stood by the fire I said to myself, "Two o'clock! I must have been asleep! Oh, I must have slept! I must have slept and I feel all right! I have slept!" I was not conscious of having slept, but I was aware of a change

that I could call a great relief. The waking at two was a natural occurrence. I always awake at two A. M. I was born at two o'clock and I always awaken at two o'clock, for however short or long a period I have slept previously. Perhaps I may awaken to a new life at two. I have often wondered if old people generally wake up at a certain hour and if that hour was the hour of their birth.

I was wide awake when I went to my bed, awake and entirely rested, and I began to wonder if I had unconsciously asked God to give me sleep. I do not mean in words. I would have remembered that, but Oh, I have so often found that God answers that desire which He forms himself, though the soul is not always conscious of it—a secret voice that perpetually draws down mercies, the spirit which "helpeth our infirmities." [Rom. 8. 26.] Oh, a wonderful verse, just consider it! "Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought; but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with

groaning which cannot be uttered." This is the prayer we carry within us, a fire that never goes out, but unknown to our physical senses, nourishes the secret prayer. If we sleep our heart waketh. [Cant. 1. 2.]

And when I darkened the room and lay restfully at peace, I wondered why age was generally all over the world a time of little sleep and of long night watches. And I specially thought of my father, who was the most sleepless of men and who often advised me to take a verse of the Psalms to bed with me if I was wakeful, or else to pray for those sleepless through pain or sorrow. Then, like music a long way off, an exquisite poem called "The Night Service" came to my mind and partially to my memory. I am sorry I cannot give the author's name, because she is only known by her initials B. M. Nor can I remember the whole, but it refers first to the morning hours, when the birds sing on every side and the winds wake and stretch out hands to God and the breath of Life is blowing and the children of God arise and sing.

And through the long, bright day there is no silence. At every hour some soul is praising God. But, she asks, who shall praise God in the night? The night that lays her fingers on the lips of men. Christ, the Shepherd King of the Church, abideth in the fields and watches over His flock by night. Who shall give Him praise for this? Who shall celebrate the name of God at the midnight?

"Lo a band of pale,
Yet joyful priests, do minister around
The Altar, where the lights are burning low
In the breathless night. Each grave brow wears
The crown of Sorrow, and each heart is kept awake
By its own restless pain. For these are they
To whom the night watch is appointed. See
They lift their hands, and bless God in the night.
Whilst we are sleeping, those to whom the King
Has measured out a cup of sorrow,
Sweet with His dear love, are waking in His Temple.
'And the eyes that cannot sleep for sorrow, or for pain,
Are lifted up to Heaven, and sweet, low songs,
Broken by patient tears, arise to God.
Bless ye the Lord ye servants of the Lord!
Which stand by night within His holy place,
To give Him worship! Ye are Priests to Him,
'And minister around the 'Altar!

The Priests must serve
Each in his course. We must stand in turn,
Awake with Sorrow, in the Temple dim
To bless the Lord by Night. We will not fear
When we are called at midnight, by some stroke
Of sudden pain, to rise and minister
Before the Lord. We too will bless His Name,
In the solemn Night, and stretch out hands to Him!"

Yes, these are the worshipers unknown to the world or even to the prophets whom God loves—the old, the sick, the sorrowful who offer Him the midnight prayer, the prayer He always answers. Perhaps I may be writing to some soul who has never really learned to pray. They may pray regularly in church, they may pray with their family, they may even say some regular personal prayer, but

We cannot hope from outward forms to win,
The passion and the life whose fountains are within.

Our human nature is a temple in three divisions. In the outer court our senses reign. The inner court is where Reason, Intellect, Will and Memory are priests. The spiritual court reaches beyond all visibles, and above all

mortal things. We pray mostly in the inner court. We pray because our reason, our intellect and our sense of righteousness urge us to give thanks for God's goodness, or our necessities have a vague hope that in His power we may find help or comfort.

But this is only the formal prayer of the outer court. Many find in it hope and satisfaction, but Oh, what is it to that close personal communion when the soul clings to the Father of spirits? Then all trouble grows lighter than a grasshopper; there is a joy past utterance, a rest unspeakable, and in such hours the mortal soul

> Doth know herself immortal; and sits light
> Upon her temporal perch.

This spiritual condition is as real as any physical fact. There may be no open vision these days, but His Presence is always near to those who love and desire Him. We must learn how to pray; saying prayers will not suffice. We say no prayers. Prayer forms

within us. It is a faculty which acts of itself. a few words will do, if the soul utters them. "God be merciful! Father forgive and love me! I am poor and needy! Think on me, even on me. Cast me not away from Thy presence! Take not Thy holy spirit from me!" If three or four words like these spring from the soul, they are a prayer never unanswered.

And there is one solemn consideration hanging upon our ability to pray, instead of saying prayers. I will be kind enough to state it plainly. If we do not pray, we do not claim our citizenship in Heaven. We shall lose it, just as a man who never uses his limbs would lose the use of them. We are members of that mysterious presence of God, which is in us and about us, and a habit of prayer and of turning to God spiritualizes the soul and makes life easy. Also prayer does prevail with God. A fervent prayer from the oldest soul, and the frailest body, will from

> The deepest dungeon climb heaven's height,
> And bring a blessing down.

VIII

THE STARS AND THE PSALMS

Take the Psalms. There is everything in the Psalms.

And the Lord God said, Let there be lights in the firmament of the heaven to divide the day from the night; and let them be for signs and for seasons, and for days and years. GENESIS 1:14.

THE Psalms are especially the Book of Books for the aged. They cannot have ache or pain, fear or doubt, but they will find in them a word—the word—which is sufficient for their relief. Oh, what trust in God, what high thoughts of Him, as the Righter and Up-

holder of all, must have been theirs, who had the writing of these Psalms for the rest of God's thoughtful children!

Now, I have in my possession a plain, rather shabby looking little volume that I prize beyond gold. It is a copy of the Psalms translated into the vernacular used by the Covenanters. It is a version of the most singular homeliness and humanity, so fatherly and neighborly in its plain speech, that I am sure they will take a tight grip on every heart that tastes their sweetness and strength. I must sometimes render the broad Scotch into English, but I shall preserve as far as possible, the spirit and form of the original.

The Book is prefaced with a study of the man David, and here is a paragraph or two of this study:

David for a man, like the rest of us, had many a fault of his own; yet sore he dree'd, and much he rue'd the wrong he wrought his neighbor, and the anger of God that followed it. But take David for a man as he stood by himself, with the trystet crown on his head, and with many an awesome wrastle beneath his feet,

his heart burning like a kiln, and his hands jimp red with blood, and the faults he owned to, and mair, we must e'en forgive him.

Two faults above the rest he had, and they were both Hebrew faults. The worst was, he sought o'er hot for blood—both God and himself had weel enough mind o' it—the Lord would have no house building at his hands, and he keep'st the sword at work among his outcome, for many a day, we ken brawly for what.

But take David through the piece, for Man and for Maker, for Seer and for King, he was more to the Lord's own liking than the rest of his kind. He had faults he might weel have been quit of, but the Lord gifted and bare with him, and liked him none the less. Yet none of David's wrong-doings slipped God's eye, or missed the dread down-coming of His Hand.

Now whoever looks for the leading of God's Good Ghost in the Book of Psalms, must look well to the kind of man, that spake for God in the same, and no less to God's own high way of guiding him.

The first thing to notice in this beautiful version are the Headings of the different Psalms. They have a wonderful pith and relevancy, and I will give a few examples which may be compared with the King James' Translation.

PSALM 17. World's bairns have their ain luck. David would fainer have the Lord's blessing. The Lord kens, and will listen to his asking.

PSALM 23. David keeps his sheep, and the Lord keeps David.

PSALM 25. David is in a sore strait, but tells how neighborly the Lord goes with biddable humble folk.

PSALM 41. Who is kind to the poor, the Lord shall be kind to him. David makes his old plea against ill friends, but the Lord holds him well. Let them do their warst.

PSALM 54. David worried and harried, flings the weight of it all on God.

PSALM 55. David, as right is, complains more of false friends, than of foul foes. He bans them to the very grave in God's Name—where all such like should go—and himself be well quit of them.

PSALM 56. David in his enemy's hand, with a stout heart, and a bold tongue, tholes the worst of it.

PSALM 112. The good a good man can do, if men would but think of it. God is the God of good works, and of good Workers.

PSALM 121. David looks high up to the Heights above Zion, and to Him that is above the heights.

So much for the headings of the Psalms. I will now quote some renderings that have a singular sweetness and familiarity. In Psalm 19:15 the last sentence reads, "O Lord my strength and my home-bringer." In Psalm 23:4, "No, though I go through the dead-mirk

dale, even there shall I fear no hurting, for Yourself is near by me, your rod and your staff hold me full cheerfully."

In Psalm 90 I read, "The days of our years are seventy years of them, or with much strength eighty years they may go, but a weary wrastle all the time of it. In a gliff, it goes by, and we *flichter hame.*" I have not been able to find English words to express the soft, moth-like going home, that the Scotch *flichtering hame* implies.

PSALM 94. When I said my foot slips, your good-will O Lord, made me strong.

PSALM 103:15. Man as he stands, his days are like grass, like a flower of the field he grows. For the wind wins over him, and gone is he; the bit place where he stood, shall know nothing more of him.

PSALM 121. To the heights I must cast my eyes, where else can my help come from?

My help is from the Lord himself, who made both the lift and the land.

He neither dovers nor sleeps who keeps watch upon Israel.

The sun shall not blight you by day, nor the moon as she goes the night through.

The temptation is to go on quoting, for Oh, how wonderful is the blessed Book of Psalms in any translation! "Everything is in the Psalms!" cried Dr. Guthrie in a burst of loving enthusiasm, and an American preacher of celebrity, on being reminded of David's flagrant sins answered, "I do not care what David *did*. He *wrote* the twenty-third Psalm."

The older we grow, the more the Psalms have to say to us. In this Book deep answers to deep, and we find not only response but guidance and comfort. They are so intensely human, and after all there is only one humanity—a single heart. In all ages man has thought and felt, loved and hated, in the same way.

The Psalms also possess what the very best of our modern hymns nearly all lack—an atmosphere. They linger round the soft sweep of clouds, the low valleys, the green hills of Bethlehem, and the snow-white top of Lebanon. There is in them a song for the moon and the stars and one for the Valley of Death, for

the grand wealth of waters, and the lonely, drouthy wilderness.

The sigh of the weary, the cry of the heart-broken, the lilt of the bird, the voice of the thunder, and the high hosannahs at the gates of Heaven may be all heard in these wonderful lyrics. Whatever the eye can see and the ear carry, the chant of the saint, the ill words of the godless, the angry ban of the righteous, the bidding of the Lord himself—are all foregathered into this marvelous Book, by his servant David, who sees and hears nothing he cannot tell and who tells all like as none but himself before or since could have better told it. If an angel presence should tell me that the twenty-third and the ninetieth and the one hundred and third Psalms were not inspired by God himself, I do not think I could believe him.

Then I suddenly remembered the Psalm of Moses, the man of God, one of the grandest prayers that the soul of man can utter, and I stopped writing for a few minutes to recall its magnificent diction and its intense human feel-

ing, and withal to wonder how Moses reached to such a sublime height as its opening verse: "Lord thou hast been our dwelling place in all generations. Before the mountains were brought forth, or even thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, thou art God." I said the words very slowly, tasting every noble syllable with a proud joy, because this everlasting God was my God.

Then I reflected that Moses was well-learned in all the wisdom of the ancient Egyptians, and that the beautiful Nile Hymn was probably in existence at that time, and though I had not at my hand Canon F. C. Cook's English rendering, I knew where I could get a copy, and it is from this copy, I transcribe the following lines from the Nile Hymn:

Creator of all good things,
He careth for the state of the poor.
He maketh the night a buckler,
He is not graven in marble,
His abode is not known.

There is no building that can contain him.
Unknown is His name in the heavens,
He manifesteth not his forms,
Vain are all representations.

Mr. Cook gives with this translation parallel verses in the Bible which it is very interesting to look up. They are Psalm 84:11, Psalm 33:4 and 5, Psalm 93:7, Deut. 4:28 and 29, Psalm 18:11, Isaiah 25:4, Psalm 77:19, Isaiah 45:15, Isaiah 40:28, Job 11:7 and Job 26:14.

Two centuries, perhaps three centuries earlier, the Hymn to Osiris was written, and with this hymn Moses was no doubt familiar. The thing that astonishes me in reading consecutively passages from the Nile Hymn, or the Hymn to Osiris, and the ninetieth Psalm, is their absolute difference in form. Moses had been thoroughly educated by Egyptian priests, yet both in form and spirit, his Psalm is intensely Hebrew. The race and the faith comes to the front in spite of a long life, culture and association. Here are a few lines from the Hymn to Osiris:

Sanctifying, beneficent, is His Name,
Veneration finds its place.
Respect immutable for His Laws.
The path is opened, the footpaths are opened,
Evil flies, and earth becomes fecundant
Peaceably, under its Lord.
Justice is confirmed
By its Lord, who pursues iniquity.

And we must remark that both these quotations represent a monotheistic creed. In the Nile Hymn there is a declaration of faithfulness in serving or obeying God that is very remarkable:

Oh Stripper of Words!
I have not made delays, or idled.

And as I am quoting from a very rich book, I will add five lines from the ancient Egyptian ritual, the solemn festal dirge when the mummy was brought into a feast:

No man comes from thence
Who tells of their sayings,
Who tells of their affairs,
Who encourages our hearts,
To go to the place, whence they return not.[1]

[1] Translation of C. W. Goodwin.

Now, who taught Moses to open his Psalms thus: "Lord thou hast been our dwelling place in all generations," and to close it with the cheerful, human petition, "Let the beauty of the Lord our God be upon us, and establish thou the work of our hands upon us, yea, the work of our hands establish thou it."

I had written thus far with the greatest delight, when the door was opened, and I heard a voice that made me turn quickly round. Then I cried, "Mary, Mary, where have you been?"

"I have been to London to see the queen," she answered cheerily, as she kissed my face and took the pencil out of my hand. "Choose a comfortable chair and talk to me, Amelia."

"Very well. I thought you were in Venice and I sent a letter there last week."

"I never went near Venice. I heard Jack's family were going there."

"But Jack would also be there."

"He does not count. With a wife and five

daughters, a man is lost sight of; and I wanted for once in my life to be quite beyond surveillance and care. I wanted to see what life would be like if I was my own mistress, out of sight and knowledge of kin and friends. I never in all my life have done as I liked."

"Why, Mary! You had the most obliging of husbands."

"I know. Will was always lovely, but somehow he always took the initiative, and though I promised myself a thousand times that I would disagree on principle with him, I never managed to do so."

"On what principle were you disposed to act?"

"On the principle of sometimes having my own way. As you have had your own way for about half a century, I should think, Amelia, I need not describe the route."

"It is usually a very unpleasant one."

"I have found that out. It was full of snubs and little offences."

"Then I suppose you were tempted to be angry, and——"

"I was never tempted long. I just said, there and then, what I wanted to say."

"Is Jack still in Venice?"

"I should not think so. Sailing on smooth water bores him. He likes to see the spindrift flying over the bowsprit. So do I. I just dropped everyone, wrote no letters, answered no inquiries, and went quietly away to England."

"Why to England?"

"Will and I took a trip through England three years ago. It was our last pleasuring. I thought I would go over every step of it—make a pilgrimage of recollection, you know."

"A lovely idea! Did you carry it out?"

"Yes, to the last milestone."

"And it made you happy?"

"No, it made me very unhappy indeed!"

"But why? You have got over the first severe shock of Will's death."

"No, I have not. I feel worse now about

losing Will than ever I did. Some women may forget, but——"

"It is not a question of forgetting. God has appointed Time to cure all sorrow. There is no voice however tenderly loved whose echo does not grow fainter and fainter with every year that passes."

"I think that is nonsense, Amelia. I have wet more handkerchiefs this past summer about Will's death than I have ever before done. I missed him so terribly. I missed him at every turn and every stop."

"Take off your hat and wraps and we will have lunch here together; then you can speak freely and tell me why you miss Will more now than ever before."

"I never tried to travel alone before. If an old lady can do anything more uncomfortable, more disrespectable, and more humiliating, I would like you to specify it. I went over precisely the same route and I stayed at precisely the same houses, public and private, that Will and I used three years ago. The same? No,

indeed! They were as different as possible."

"How were they different?"

"Everyway and every*how*. When Will was with me, the guards on the trains took us obsequiously to the best coach, kindly locked us in, and gave us the four extra seats for nothing. I could take off my hat, and wraps, turn the seats into a sofa and make myself comfortable. Will could smoke and I could say whatever I liked about the country and other things and we were as happy as two children. When we went to Edinburgh there was a lunch of fine Cheviot mutton ready for us at Carlisle, and at Edinburgh a carriage for ourselves and a wagon for our baggage waiting. The kindness and consideration shown us could not be exceeded, and throughout the whole journey, I was treated with the most delightful respect.

"My dear, the very same guard did not know me this summer, when I was alone. I was glad to see him and greeted him like a friend and he touched his hat as frigidly as if he was made of ice and put me in a coach containing

five people—two old men, cross as bears, one sulky young man, and two middle-aged women, whose blood I think had turned to vinegar. They spoke once every hour in a kind of whisper to the two old men, who answered them with a grunt in their throats that I suppose meant yes or no. At Carlisle, the young man pointedly took another coach and I laughed and everyone looked at me as if I had committed an unpardonable social sin. It was about the same on every line I used. Yet three years before, Will and I made a joyous 'procession of two,' over the same dreary, weary miles. What do you think of such an experience, Amelia?"

"I think you could have prevented it."

"By giving money away?"

"Just so. Guards do not touch their caps and give you a whole coach for nothing."

"I am conscientiously opposed to tipping."

"Then do not travel in Europe."

"I shall never do it again. When women are sixty-five, they should stop at home."

"Unless they have male escorts. You ought to have remained with your son. Did you go to visit any of your husband's family or friends?"

"Yes."

"Well?"

"It was just the same thing. They were very polite to me, but I felt at once how much of my previous welcome belonged to Will's ability to give them a knowledge of American 'preferences' and investments. And I could not help feeling as if Will's family considered me in some way accountable for his death. Of course it was only fancy, but there must have been some element in the atmosphere of the big, gloomy house that crystallized into that particular thought. His eldest sister told me that they had two death signs in their old family, and both had been given them. I wonder if you believe in such things, Amelia?"

"I think those to whom they are sent believe in them. No one else has anything to do with them. Signs are like dreams; they have a per-

sonal meaning to which the general public has not the interpretation. However, not long ago I read a very remarkable sign of life and death, which is a prophecy to every human being, and which was said to be published from the New York *World.*"

"I should like to hear it."

"Here it is—starting from the base of the big toe, there is a distinct line. This is the life line. In some feet it curves along until it terminates under the instep, far toward the base of the little toe. This means long life. If broken in the hollow of the foot, it denotes sickness at middle age and if it terminates in the hollow of the foot, it means a short life. This line the *World* adds 'is most interesting, and the experiments that have been conducted lately have proven it to be an unfailing sign of longevity.'

"This is how it appeals to me, Amelia. You appear to think that our human world may be enclosed or encroached upon by a higher spiritual world as little above us and as near to us

as the animal world is below us and beneath us. Also you are quite sure that there are constant angelic visitors in great numbers among us whose business it is to minister to those who shall be heirs of salvation, to protect, warn, and advise them in all the straits of life; and you think that though they are rarely visible, yet they are rarely absent from the mortal for whom they care."

"You state what I dare to believe very truly, Mary."

"Then these marks on our bodies might be—I only say might be—some kind of directions to them, regarding the destiny of the child they have to guard. If a doctor prescribes medicine, he writes the prescription in some kind of strange words and queer signs, but the person who is to make the medicine understands those strange signs of apothecaries' weight very well."

"That is a new thought to me, Mary, but there is in New York a man in a very high position among divines and scholars who knows everything occult that can be known. I will

send and ask him to dine with us tonight and we will talk the subject out with him. He will bring the light of sincere faith in God, a wide scientific knowledge of things, and an almost omniscient acquaintance with popular life and literature to help our decision. Shall I send for Professor B. tonight?"

"Could you not make it tomorrow night, Amelia?"

"But why put off so interesting a question?"

"Just because my best gowns are hardly unpacked, and today even, my hair is uncrimped and untidy. I was in such a hurry to see you."

"Well, dear, we will make it tomorrow."

It is so easy to put off even the mind for the body. I sent to ask Professor B. to come the following evening and told him plainly that we wanted his opinion regarding a something in our human nature we did not understand. I told him this because I judged that, being a man, he would like to inform women, and moreover that, being a professor or master, he would dearly love to be a schoolmaster.

IX

A LITTLE ASTRAL SCIENCE

The Stars! No wonder if an Eternal Destiny seemed to sit enthroned there. No wonder if they seemed to have in their mystic motion an invisible sympathy with human life and its mysterious destinies. No wonder if he who could read best their laws, was reckoned best able to interpret the duties of this life, and all that connects man with that which is invisible. . . . Astrology was the religion of the world's youth.

REV. FREDERICK ROBERTSON.

MY invitation was heartily accepted, and after a delightful dinner in the delightful dining-room of the old hostelry, I invited half-a-dozen ladies to my parlor to listen to the

Professor. They made a pleasing circle in the small room, and the Professor stood on the hearth-rug and looked at us with a beaming face. He was an extremely handsome man of about seventy years of age, very tall and erect, and very properly clothed in a rather severe clerical costume. On the whole he was a fine example of that beautiful manliness which is the result and outcome of a thousand years of Christian thought and culture. Not a man of merely dry facts, but one through whose mind rolled the stars and all mysteries.

I briefly stated our dilemma, and read him the paragraph from the New York *World*. Then I asked if he was a believer in signs, and if so, was it at all likely that such marks on our hands and feet were signs and symbols somehow relating to our life?

He was intensely interested at once and answered with a kind of confident joy, "The whole world is a sign, and who shall read the interpretation thereof is written on everything we see. The sign is always there, if only our

spiritual vision is there also." Then he drew to the table about which we were gathered, the large chair purposely placed for him, and sat down.

"Ladies," he continued, "will you remember first of all that our world was at one time a part of the sun. Her days and nights, her seasons and tides, would be unintelligible if we took no notice of this ancient alliance with her celestial companions. We also know that the magnetic storms, which silently rage through the earth, correspond with similar events in the sun. An eminent scientist connects the spots on the sun with war, famine, commercial disasters, and financial stringency, and thus sends us to the sun for forecasts of the money market."

"Who dares to say such a wicked thing as that, Doctor?" asked an old lady of whom I knew little, excepting that she was an intense Calvinist, and six years older than myself.

"If you will send to the library and get the first volume of Huth's 'Life of Buckle,' you

will find that statement and similar ones, on the two hundred and forty-seventh page," answered the Doctor. And she was silenced by his manner alone. For she was timid, and had but one view on any soul subject, while he met all subjects at intellectual sword point, and approved or condemned them without hesitation.

Smiling he continued, "Not only is the earth affected by the sun, she is also under the influence of her planetary companions in a greater or lesser degree, and it would be contrary to all analogy to suppose their influence did not extend to the inhabitants of the earth. Thus man is a product not only of the earth but of the universe; and is influenced by the other planets as well as by his own. The physical conditions of birth are the same, but the face of the heavens is constantly changing, and as a result we have that infinite variety in moral and intellectual qualities which might be the result of the position of the heavenly bodies at the time of birth. I do not say that it is the result. I asked you at the beginning, who

shall read the interpretation of what is written on everything we see?

"The writing on our hands and brows and feet cannot be put there without a reason for it. It has many distinctions which prove it of divine origin. First it is universal. Every infant brings this wonderful script with it into life and except in long-continued insanity, it is not blotted out. Certain signs wear out, when they are accomplished, for instance I know very well a lady on whose hand the sign of marriage, an even cross at the base of the first finger, was clear and vivid until her widowhood, after which it faded away. There are in every hand a few lines that have a broad similarity, just as in every face there are the same component features, but never two faces alike. So in every hand, three or four lines are always present; the rest form a labyrinth, as far beyond the making or altering of a man as the features of the face are.

"However, I will give you some famous instances of the supernatural intelligence hidden

in the script of the hand—intelligence so real, so impossible to fabricate, so possible for everyone to authenticate for themselves, that you will be forced to think, even if your thought only leads you to acknowledge we are 'fearfully and wonderfully made, and that our souls know right well.'

"I have told you that all analogy convinces us that the planets influence men as well as storms and material growths. Now listen to me. From Egyptian and Chaldean antiquity have come down to us certain signs which indicate insanity and which have doubtless never been known to fail. Certain positions of Saturn, Mars, Mercury and the Moon—to which modern research has added Uranus —at a man's or woman's birth, indicate insanity.

"I would prefer to say that the influence of these planets is always marked. In many cases it amounts to insanity. Some cases are mitigated by counteracting planetary influence, but if these are not present, then moral obliquity

is a frequent result, for it is a great truth that wickedness is madness.

"Nine rulers, insane or notoriously deficient in intellect, were born when Mercury or the Moon, or both were affected by Mars, Saturn and Uranus. They were Paul of Russia, George the Third of England, Gustavus the Fourth of Sweden, Ferdinand the Second of Austria, Maria of Portugal, Charlotte of Mexico, Charles the Second of Spain, Murad the Fifth of Turkey and Constantine of Russia who was compelled to abdicate in favor of his brother. The birthday of all these nine was affected by the same evil planets. Is this chance?

"Five people of genius, who were ruled by the same planets at birth were Gerard de Nerval, who killed himself while insane; Alfred Rethel, the painter; Agnes Bury, the actress; Jullien Pugen, and Paul Morphy. Swift, Moore, Southey, Faraday, who had the same evil influences at their birth, became insane in old age. Another variety born when these

planets were in conjunction, contain Swedenborg; Prince Hohenlohe, who claimed to work miracles; Joseph Smith, the founder of Mormonism; Katherine Emmerick; Lady Hester Stanhope; and Brother Ignatius, who has Uranus halfway with Mercury.

"The two great Socialists, Proudhon and Saint Simon, have identical planets at their birth—Mercury in conjunction with the sun and moon, and quartet with Mars. Mr. Gladstone and Cardinal Newman had the same influences at their birth—the sun and the moon and Mercury—the only difference being that in the statesman the signs are formed from tropical signs and in the divine, from the common signs.

"The massive intellects of Bacon and Bishop Thirlwall have the same signs, and it is a fact that a preponderating percentage of scientific men have been born when Mercury was either in fixed signs, or in strong aspect with Saturn. Whewill, Airy, Peacock and Lubbock are cases in point.

"I must not," he continued, "forget the poets. Poetical genius has Mercury and the moon in opposition. This condition is found in Shakespeare, Byron, Wordsworth, Shelley, Keats, Heine, Musset and Ruskin.

"This general view must of course have extensive modifications, according to the strength of the planets' influence at the time of birth. Astral science makes free use of heredity, for the two influences complete each other. Heredity accounts for the element of stability; and astral science for variety.

"Do you think, ladies, that this influence dominant at your birth is a matter of accident? I can only say that I have found it to stand in the nicest relation to the character of the individual as determined by his parentage."

"And what was your resulting thought, Doctor?" I asked.

"It was this: that good parents, as a rule, bring forth children under good aspects. The resemblance among the nativities of the same family is often very strong. Surely there is

some foresight which adapts birth to the natal influence. God loves His children. Before they are born He has called them by name. Will He not see that they come to their nativity under the best influences, for He knows the precise lesson they are coming to this earth to master?

"There is only one thing more I shall tell you, ladies, but it is a very interesting item of stellar science: Those who are to love each other have the same signs at birth. If they are of different sexes, they marry, and are very happy. In ancient Greece they called such couples "the perfected." This fact accounts also for the strong attachments some women form for each other as soon as they meet; they have the same natal signs."

"Are there any instances of this love, Doctor, because of the same natal signs, that are prominent enough to be well known?" I asked.

"A great many," he answered. "Queen Victoria and Prince Albert had the same signs. The late King of Denmark and the Countess

Damer; Frederick the Seventh and the milliner whom he ennobled and married morganatically; Metternich and Gentry; Rahel and Varnhagen von Ense; Novalis and the girl Sophia, fourteen years old, for whom he conceived such an intense attachment. These are interesting examples. Sophia's moon was upon the same place as that of Novalis, her Mars on his sun, and her Venus on his Mars."

"And you believe in these signs, Doctor?" asked Mary.

"The facts, as I have stated them to you, are beyond disbelief or argument. They are notorious ones from history and biography and the ordinary epheneris. There is nothing occult or mystical about them. Anyone who will take the trouble can go over the examples given and certify them, or can search for other examples himself. I must believe in much that I do not understand, but I do not think what I have suggested is beyond likelihood. God is called the lover of souls. He has made every soul. He has appointed angels to minis-

ter to them and watch over them, and will He not provide for each reincarnation, the home and the influences most favorable for the special lesson of that reincarnation? An earthly father looks well to the school in which he places his son. Will our heavenly Father do less?"

"You believe, Doctor, that God has appointed angels to minister to and care for those who are here at an earthly school and far from home? Might not these marks on the hand be a kind of celestial prescription for angelic help, in the great crises of life?"

"I would not say such care was improbable. God set a special mark on Cain to preserve his life. For several reasons it would not be one to be read by men, but rather a direction to the angel who had charge over him. This sign set on Cain is very remarkable; turn to Genesis and read the fourteenth chapter from the first to the sixteenth verse. The steps of a good man are ordered of the Lord, and he delighteth in his way, and Christ assures us that

the very hairs of our heads are numbered. I have said enough tonight to make you remember that your mortality has heavenly alliances and I will finally remind you that the great law of attraction works as surely in the heavens as on the earth. Ask for heavenly good things, expect them, and you will get them. That is taking a long step higher than stellar attraction, and I pray you take it."

Then the Doctor turned the conversation on the leading topics of the day, and after a little while of interesting and illuminative comment, bid us good night.

A marked silence followed his departure, and for a moment or two no one offered to break it. At length Mary said, "A most interesting and suggestive talk. I am going to the library tomorrow, and ask for some books on astral science."

"I would not do anything of the kind," said the little Calvinist. "I think the statements made by Dr. B. were extremely wicked. Men and women are influenced either by God or the

devil. The stars have nothing to do with men."

"Many years before David was born," I said, "his star is hailed in Numbers 24:17, 'There shall come a Star out of Jacob, and a Sceptre shall rise out of Israel,' and you do not need to be reminded of the star that hailed the birth of Christ, which led the wise men of the East throughout a two-years' journey, and finally stood over the manger in which the divine child lay."

"These were unusual cases. Neither the stars, nor planets, nor suns, have any influence over us."

"Well," I answered, "it is not worth while considering that question now, because we always act as if they did not exist. I knew more about astral science than the Doctor told us tonight, thirty years ago, and during those thirty years, sorrow and sickness and perplexities of all kinds have assailed me. I am positive that I never once thought of the stars either as causers or helpers in affliction. At

the very first premonition of trouble of any kind, I fled to the Rock that is higher than I. I put myself and my affairs at once in His Hands. I cried, 'Help me, O Lord my God! O save me according to thy mercy!' And He saved me—always! Never once did I even remember the stars. I looked unto the Lord my strength and refuge and fortress in affliction. [Jer. 16:19.] Why should anyone go to the stars for help or counsel when he can go to Him who made the stars, who telleth their number and calleth them by name, who made 'Arcturus, Orion, and Pleiades, and the chambers of the south.' [Job 9:9.]

"Canst thou bind the sweet influences of Pleiades, or loose the bands of Orion?

"Canst thou bring forth Mazzaroth in his season? or canst thou guide Arcturus with his sons? [Job 38:31, 32.]"

And I rose with the words and we said a rather uncertain good night. That is, nearly everyone felt themselves to be on uncertain ground. As if the wonders and works of the

Almighty were not lawful subjects for our wonder and consideration, seeing that we knew how to look through Nature unto Nature's God. All spiritual enquiry which is merely curious is dangerous, I grant. Truth is for the soul, rather than for the intellect. No scientific analysis can discover the truths of God. Science submits everything to the experience of the senses, but no one can by searching find out God.

"Everyone wants to learn and to do so much that he cannot learn and do," said Mary to me. "This is particularly so, as we grow old. I seem so eager and am really so incapable."

"That is," I answered, "Browning's common problem, mine, yours, and everyone's, and he advises us,

> "Not to fancy what were fair in Life,
> Provided it could be; but finding first,
> What may be, then find how to make it fair
> Up to our means—a very different thing."

"I am tired, Amelia. I will stay here all night. Going to the stars is as wearisome as

going to Europe. I must sleep before I can manage another day."

"Well, Mary, the night hides within it the promise of the day."

X

SOME NATIONAL CHARACTERISTICS

The world is too much with us; late and soon,
Getting and spending we lay waste our powers.

That blessed word,
In which the burden and the mystery,
In which the heavy and the weary weight
Of all this unintelligible world
Is lightened.

I DID not see Mary in the morning, but about noon I had a call from an old acquaintance and she stayed to lunch with me. Then I heard over again a long story of a family disagreement for which there was appar-

ently no reason whatever. She had two sons married. The three daughters of the eldest son were motherless, and she had taken charge of them from their infancy. The three daughters of the youngest son had a mother who was continually worrying because she imagined their grandmother was devoted to the three motherless girls she had in her charge and cared nothing for her three daughters. She constantly remembered that my friend had objected to her son's marriage with her, and she had really persuaded herself that the dislike shown at first to her personally now extended to her children.

From this cause had arisen much misunderstanding and ill-feeling, suspicions of wrong-doing and wrong-saying and all the ill brood of Envy and Jealousy. I shall not waste words in relating the story. I listened to it once more not without sympathy; for an old woman defrauded of the love that should have been hers and blamed for an affectionate solicitude and care, which if it had been wanting would

have been a still greater wrong, is deserving of sympathy.

So I said, "Let us analyze your trouble and try and find some way out of it. You see, dear, a family is not a guild or a league or a society. These are social and artificial unions and sooner or later come to an end. But we none of us choose our father or mother or brother or sister or home. They are chosen for us, and we are bound to them by ties reaching into two eternities."

"Yes," she answered, "I often say something like this to my girls. I tell them it is their duty to love each other."

"Tell them to remember what a wonderful thing family love is—that the love they have for their father is not the same kind of love they have for their mother; that boys love their sisters differently from their brothers, and that sisters love each brother with an affection special to his case and character."

"That is so true. I see it every day."

"Then remind them of the diversity of char-

acter in a family, the strength of the father, the tenderness of the mother, the fidelity of brother and sister. Again, one brother is adventurous, another practical, a third poetic. One member of the family may be strong, another frail, or sick, and these and many other traits are not accidental—they are of divine ordination and no family is complete without this variety."

"When we were young, Mrs. Barr, there was in every family a kind of family persuasion. We adopted our father's and mother's creed in everything. We held the family views and opinions about everything, without one misgiving. It is really quite touching to remember our good-humored confidence in all of them. Every one of my granddaughters want their own way and is sure it is the only right way."

"Thus," I answered, "they miss the discipline and education of the family which is a very complete and wonderful one. What faith and patience and forbearance we show to the faults we have been used to from infancy!

Family affection is a divine thing, or we would not love or even tolerate those whose actions we are obliged to condemn. It even blinds us so far as to make us excuse in our own what we condemn in others. We think of and talk of and feel toward our own as if they were different beings from the rest of mankind. If they are wronged, how bitterly we resent it! If they fail in anything, we blame anyone or any event rather than believe they failed deservedly. In the bottom of our hearts we may not approve their conduct, but kin is less than kind, when it admits the fact."

"Dear me!" cried my friend. "It is so seldom now we hear the words kin or kindred. My father always used them. They sound good."

"Yes," I answered, "they are among a few grand old words fading away from family life, and which everyone should do their best to restore. Kin, kinsman, kindred and kinsfolk. They come from the oldest root in the whole Aryan stem, and it is a shame to push them out

of use and meaning. But kin is nearly gone. Kind and kindly have changed their original significance, and instead of kindred and kinsfolk—words with a delightful meaning—we have relations, a word which may mean anything—or nothing. For we stand in all kinds of relations not only to our family but to the whole world. As far as relations go, we had better take them as we find them; we have no choice as we have in friends. Which of us has not relations that would never be on our list of friends?"

"It is a queer thing," my friend answered, "but the men take no notice of the ill-feeling. Horace and George lunch together as a general thing, and they are finger and thumb in business matters, but they never name the family quarrel."

"They don't believe in it. They think it a bit of childish jealousy. You must put it right."

"How can I put it right?"

"There are many ways. Suppose you give

them a dance, and make them all an exactly similar present. You tell me the last offence was because you gave the three daughters of your son Horace ermine furs, and the daughters of your son George, chinchilla."

"That was perfectly right, Mrs. Barr. Maria, Grace and Julia are older than their cousins. They had rich suits of dark violet velvet and the ermine was just what was proper. George's girls had all some sort of tweed or woolen suits, and the chinchilla was exactly the thing for them. Also, they are but schoolgirls yet, and ermine is not for schoolgirls."

"Did you explain that to them?"

"I never thought it necessary."

"It would probably have spared all the trouble. Arrange a little dance for them, and give to all six bracelets exactly alike. Then you could begin the New Year happily, and share every pleasure that came to both families. Have it at Christmas or New Year, and tacitly determine to turn over a new leaf."

"A good many people sneer a little now at Christmas and New Year festivities."

"The sense of family obligations is now very exclusive. We may smile at the delight which irradiates a Scotchman's face at the sight of a sixth or seventh cousin, and exclude from our sympathies all but those on our special twig of the family tree. Yet blood *is* thicker than water, and all other things being equal, a far-off cousin is really nearer to us than a stranger."

"I am sure I shall never be too old or too wise or too selfish to do without my own family."

"And I am sure that those who do try to divest themselves of all family ties and obligations will certainly come to a day when the wide, wide world will be a world too wide for them."

"I shall buy the bracelets and have the little dance."

"Do. You always succeed in what you attempt, and you will not fail in this matter.

You can rely on the family tie helping you. There is help far mightier than that. I need not to remind you that God is not only the King of Kings and the Father and Lover of men; He is also 'the God of the families of the whole earth.' And Christ is not only our Savior and Elder Brother; it is 'in our Lord Jesus Christ, the whole family in heaven and earth are named.' I think next time we meet you will tell me that the two families are one."

We parted with a smile, but there was a sigh in my heart, for I knew that all theories of domestic life must come at last to the give and take, the bear and forbear theory; and the young won't, or can't see it.

* * * * * *

Everyone knows what it means to become the slave of one word, or idea. It may only be some haunting lines of a song or a forgotten name or a face you know and cannot place, but, however important or trivial it may be, while its tyranny lasts you are completely mastered by its influence. This thing happened to

me while writing "The Belle of Bowling Green." The hero took possession of me. I could not rid myself of the personality I had created. I was miserable and idle by force, and actually so sensibly angry with my tormentor, that I began to plan his punishment. I would marry him to the woman he hated. I would reduce him to poverty. I would even invent a crime against him and dismiss him from the story. The feeling was a harassing one, and on the third day I closed the door of my study as if I could shut up the tormenting obsession in the room in which it had been created.

I spent the morning with Thomas in the garden and sometimes eluded the mental specter, but in the afternoon I was weary and thoroughly disquieted at a condition at once so apparently simple and so really distressing. Then in the afternoon a famous physician made me a social call, and conversation in some way drifted naturally to the work I was on. So it fell out, I spoke to him of the mental condition

that was making me wretchedly unhappy and idle and of certain fears it brought with it.

He asked me at once if I played cards and I answered,

"I used to be a fairly good whist player."

"Can you play any games of solitaire?" he continued.

"Two," I answered. "Napoleon and fascination."

"That will do. Have you two packs in the house?"

"Not one."

"Send and get two packs this afternoon and play Napoleon, or the other game as long as you can."

"But how will this help me, Doctor?"

"Try it and you will find the help."

So I sent for the cards at once, and I played Napoleon until I was called to supper, and when that happened I remembered my hero. He had been quite forgotten for an hour.

A few days afterwards I was playing a game of solitaire after my lunch, between my morn-

ing and afternoon work, which hour I had decided to surrender to the exercise, when my friend Mary opened my study door with her usual glad impulsiveness. She just glanced at me and then in a tone of utter amazement cried out,

"Amelia! Whatever is the matter with you?"

"I am taking my medicine, Mary. It is not unpleasant."

Then I informed her of my condition when Dr. N. called, and of his ready help in my distress. "So simple," I said, "and so effective."

"But so vulgar, my dear," she ejaculated. "Solitaire! Why every night when I go last thing through my house, I pay a visit to the kitchen and I always find the cook sitting at the kitchen table with a pack or two of dirty greasy cards before her. I do think such an aristocratic doctor might have found you more respectable company."

"Well, Mary, I have thoroughly informed

myself about my company. Since I have to associate with these four kings, I have made it my business to look up their pedigree, and I find it very respectable. Why, Mary, the line of these four wonderful kings is more ancient than that of any reigning house. Their empire embraces Christendom and heathendom, and now when kinging is such an uncertain business and thrones but moveable stock, they may indeed be proud of the never-failing loyalty and obedience of their subjects."

"What did you find out? Anything very interesting? I have often wondered who invented cards. They are so simple, and yet so capable of interminable changes. Was it France—Spain—Germany?"

"All of these countries claim the honor, but they are all too late, Mary. Six hundred years is the oldest record any of them can show, while the Asiatic Society in London have three packs of Hindu cards, aged twelve hundred years. Their material is canvas so highly

varnished as to look like wood, and the figures on them are so ancient that no person or tradition, even in that land of few changes, can explain them."

"I dare say the Professor has seen them."

"Very likely. But these old kings had no queens. France introduced the queens."

"Well, Amelia, the exclusion of women is not altogether an antiquated or Eastern idea. Western men of our own century have amusements to which women are not invited."

"The insignia of the Indian cards were bells, acorns, leaves and diamonds. I cannot find out who introduced clubs and spades. I read yesterday that the gypsies came to England at the close of the fifteenth century and brought the art of fortune telling by cards with them, and as these people are undoubtedly Asiatics, they furnish another proof of the Eastern origin of cards. This gave to cards a new fascination, one whose charm four centuries of light and knowledge has not dispelled."

"I do not believe your four kings had much

authority when the Puritans reigned in England."

"The Puritans called them 'the devil's playthings' but with the return of royalty, they had double honor; and in Queen Anne's reign, their power may be said to have culminated. Ombre and piquet were then the favorite games, and they continued so until the Georgian era. Pope made ombre immortal, by his "Rape of the Lock," and the passion for cards at this time attained a height which ended in such gigantic speculation as the South Sea Bubble and the Mississippi Scheme."

Here Professor B. entered, and when he found what I was trying to do, he took up the story. He told us that it was not until the beginning of the eighteenth century that whist became popular, and that it was either invented or much altered from some earlier game by a man called Hoyle who had large classes of noblemen under his tuition for it. He told us Dr. Johnson thought it was called whist to denote the silence necessary for the game; and

then I suddenly remembered the old ivory whist markers I had often seen when a child, nearly all of which bore the motto, "Keep your temper."

"I wonder at a game in which people could not talk and laugh and tell stories, becoming popular," said Mary.

"Once," continued the Professor, "Lords Shaftsbury, Halifax and Anglesea asked the philosopher, Locke, to join them in a game of whist. He declined and while they played, continued writing. At the close of the game, he showed the noble lords his manuscript. It was an exact report of their conversation, and they were so ashamed of it, they never afterward named whist in his presence."

"Delightful!" cried Mary. "The next time I am at one of Jack's whist parties, I shall turn reporter. Jack always calls me a little cheat."

"Well, Mary?"

"Oh, I don't think it wrong to cheat at cards —if you can! There is no fun to me in a game if I do not get the better of someone in some

way. It is such a little sin," and she smiled so confidingly, that we smiled with her, and the Professor continued,

"The four kings still reign, but their power has sensibly waned among sensible people. The blood of this century is of quicksilver; men cannot sit still in their amusements; billiards, golf, polo, even dancing, harmonizes better than whist, with the impulsive, mobile character of the times. And this is specially true of Americans," he said with an air.

Then he advised us to read Elia's delightful picture of *Sarah Battle,* the perfect whist player, who loved a thorough-paced partner and a determined enemy who took and gave no concessions, who hated favors, and never made a revoke nor ever passed it over to her adversary without exacting the utmost forfeiture, who never connived at miscellaneous conversation during a game, emphatically observing that cards were cards. "Take down your copy of 'Elia's Essays,'" he said, "and renew your acquaintance with *Sarah Battle,* and then I

think," he said, smiling at me, "you may progress from solitaire to whist."

"I shall never have the time in this reincarnation, Professor, to waste on card playing as an amusement."

"To be sure. Your solitaire is medicinal. But you, Mary! I am afraid you waste a good deal of time at whist or bridge parties. Yet I shall not reprove you lest I get the same answer Dr. South got when he spoke to a confirmed card player about the waste of her time. "Waste of time!" she answered. "Ah, yes, that is true, Doctor, in *cutting and shuffling,* but how is that to be avoided?"

Then we all laughed, and Mary said,

"I have been told that there never was a lucky hand that held the four of spades, and, Professor, what is meant by court cards? I heard a man use the word but I did not like to ask him *why?*"

"They are so called because of their heraldic devices. The king of clubs originally represented the Pope, spades stood for the king of

France, the king of diamonds for Spain, and the king of hearts for England. The queens of the four suits were taken from real personages. They were likenesses of Maria d'Anjou, the queen of Charles VII; Isabeau, the queen mother; Agnes Sorel, the king's mistress, and Joan d'Arc, the dame of spades or war."

"Professor, all this is very interesting," I said, "and I never heard it before."

"Well, I was three years in Paris, and I found out 'many inventions.' I further discovered that French peasants yet know these four kings and queens, by the familiar names given them by players centuries ago: David spades, Alexander clubs, Caesar diamonds, and Charles hearts. The queens were Juno hearts, Judith clubs, Rachel diamonds and Pallas spades."

"I think these familiar names would give so much personality to a game," said Mary. "You would feel as if you were really getting the better of someone."

"But, Mary," I answered, "David would always get the better of Pallas, and Alexander

would always down Judith, and Caesar always take Rachel and Charles, Juno. It would be a bad example."

"That would not matter. The thing is long past example; it is already a hoary custom. And it would be exhilarating to throw down your card with a flourish and say, 'Rachel is trump.'" And then Mary put on her hat and went with the Professor for a drive in the park, and I watched them away with a little speculation in my mind.

I did no more that afternoon. My game was still unfinished, but I put the cards away. Their story was more interesting than they were, and I lay down to rest and to sleep with the kings and queens flitting about my pillow.

Toward the gloaming, I was sitting in the large red parlor. There was always a good fire during the season of fires at the Broadway end of the room, and I liked to sit and muse in its light and watch the women come straggling in from visiting or shopping, and the men from business. It was not a social hour.

As a general thing acquaintances did not see each other, but there was always something interesting to watch. For the men did not go to their rooms as soon as the women; they lounged on the comfortable sofas or talked softly to each other until the warning half-hour bell before dinner struck. A few women —always old women—sat in small groups, and perhaps their grandchildren were with them. But for an hour or an hour and a half the large red parlor with its glowing fire and dim lights was a very restful pleasant place.

Indeed I was half asleep "slooming" we call the half-here condition in England, when a gentleman accosted me and drew a chair to my side. I recognized him at once, though he was but a passing acquaintance, and I had not seen him for two years. It was the old bachelor to whom I had suggested a millionaire old man's club. He had evidently taken my suggestion seriously, and had spent much time in evolving plans for the famous-to-be structure.

He confessed, however, that he had failed.

Men praised his project, and gladly talked it over with him, but no one was inclined to spend money on its realization. The very mention of a check made the majority remember what good homes and careful wives they had in case they were sick; and ordinarily they found comfort enough in some of the clubs they belonged to. "I got quite discouraged," he said, "and gave the project up."

"Did you really think I was in very sober earnest in my suggestion?" I asked.

"Of course I did. I was sure it was a grand idea."

"I am sorry you thought so. But that clubs for the aged are pleasant and necessary is not a new idea. It is, in fact, a naturally inherent necessity of certain conditions of life and of that," I added, "I had a very delightful proof not a week ago."

"How pleasant! I'm sure I congratulate you. May I ask what it represented?"

"A club just founded in the town of Warsaw, Indiana."

"Oh, really! What is it called?"

"The Girls of Seventy!"

"You astonish me. It must be a woman's club."

"It is, and the first requisite for membership is that the applicant shall be full seventy years old."

"Are they rich women?"

"By no means—as you count riches."

"Then about their clubhouse?"

"They have only a few rented rooms."

"Then how can they possibly have any space for their necessary comfort and recreation?"

"They are not seeking comfort and recreation. They are very happy old women who have all they personally desire in their own homes. But they have united for the purpose of making others that are poor and needy, sick and sorrowful, as happy as they can be made. 'Love and Service' is their motto. They were the two principles that moved our Lord Jesus Christ, and I have no doubt they will be suf-

ficient to keep The Girls of Seventy splendidly useful and prosperous."

"Are they married women?"

"In a large majority. They have brought up sons and daughters and seen them safely guarded in their own homes, and now being lonely and often out of congenial employment, they have united on a plan, not beyond their financial means and physical power, to spend the rest of their blessed lives in love and service for those who are in need of it. You might now suggest to the clubs with which you are connected, an association of the Boys of Seventy for the same purpose."

"It would be rather an imposition, I am sure. All our rich men have recognized charities which upon the whole they support liberally."

"I do not doubt it. I was thinking of their own individual pleasure and profit in the work."

"Oh! I do not think I understand."

"For instance, if they roused themselves and went for a walk, not on Fifth Avenue or the Park, but down in the alleys and wretched

streets of the struggling poor. It might happen that they fall in with a neglected little lad who only wanted kindness and attention to make him a fine man. What pleasure they might feel in clothing and educating and teaching the child how to love them. They might live to see him 'grow up and call them blessed.' Or taking a place on some of those seats of sorrow in the parks, they might find some worthy man buffeting the waves of disappointment and poverty with a wife and little children looking to him for the bread he cannot find. Then he might learn that he is seeing a far greater tragedy than Sophocles or Shakespeare ever wrote, and stooping to lift up the broken in heart and home, taste the blessedness of being an almoner of God. Go and tell them these things."

"Oh, really! But you know they would not listen. I could not expect it. You set me a task impossible—quite imprudent, too."

"Your aunt told me you once wished to be a missionary."

He laughed uncomfortably, and said, "Ah, but you see I was very young in those days—very young, indeed—not yet out of college! We desire many rash things when we are young, and it would have been a fatally rash thing for me to have gone then to a new and perhaps dangerous climate. I was quite delicate in my college days. I am not very strong now, never have been yet"—and he sighed deeply—"I think I would then have made a good missionary. I was in earnest—though it was foolish, of course. Well I must bid you a short farewell. My mother is at the Waldorf and will be looking for my company at dinner tonight."

He left with me a sense of disappointment, and I had an impression that this taste of his youth had been full of bitterness. I tried to dismiss the subject from my thought and feeling, and as the room was now lighted and people were coming and going constantly, I sat up to watch them. It was nearly always worth while for some reason or other, and this even-

ing my interest was aroused at once by the entrance of a voluble Frenchman. He did not wait until he reached his friend; he was greeting him as he crossed the room. And what a sample of airy, graceful politeness that greeting was! No revelation of national character could have been more perfect. It never pretended to be anything but superficial. *"Comment vous portez-vous!"* (How do you carry yourself?) touches externals only; it would not even insinuate anything beyond what you choose to carry before society.

Compare this greeting with the German national inquiry, *"Wie geht's?"* (How goes it?) It is the transcendental greeting, the polite way of saying, "You are only a helpless conjunction of atoms, at the mercy of some inscrutable influence: How goes *it?*" Yet the question is the outcome of Teutonic speculation, of inquisitive, atheistical dreaming.

Then, keeping in mind the position that the national greeting might explain the national character, I recalled the ancient Greek whose

life was a dream of beauty and whose heaven was not far off, and concluded that the gladsomeness and exultation of their national salutation were well warranted—*"Rejoice! Rejoice!"* Shall we find anything better to say, when the thousand years of peace come in than that exultant salutation of old Athens, *"Rejoice!"*

The old Roman greeting was equally fitting, *"Salve! Vale!"* (Be healthy! Be strong!) The poetic Greek's good wish touched the soul. The materialistic Roman knew no higher good than the welfare of the body.

England has been at a great feast of languages and stolen some part or parcel of salutation from as many sources, but none equals the sturdy national growth of the Plantagenets, "How do you *do?*" Not how do you appear, or how do you feel, but how do you *do?* This inquiry sprung from the heart of a nation of workers and fighters, from men to whom doing and daring were the sum of life. This sentence is English undefiled, for it is the doer, not the

dreamer, who must work out the future of humanity.

Yet, if we would have proof that man is composed of a fixed and a flowing quality, and understand that though Nature always makes him the same, circumstances always make him different, it is only necessary to take an hour's journey across a boundary line and hear how a Scotsman moderates and amplifies and generalizes the brusque directness of the English, "How do you do," into "Hoo's a' wi' ye?" That means, how's your health and wealth, how's your wife and weans? And if used by ministers or elders, it contains a cautious invitation to spiritual confidences, which could be either accepted or ignored without remark or offence. "Hoo's a' wi' ye?" is the greeting of a race whose lingual strength is in the point of interrogation, one of the great secrets of success.

It is a noticeable thing to observe that half-civilized and all unprogressive peoples retain the religious element in their greeting. The

"God save you, sirs," of the Tudors, lost the divine prefix with the Commonwealth. After that time, there was no invariable putting of God first, which *Dogberry* so queerly Englishizes in his direction, "Write God first, for God defend, but God should go before such villains!" The "God be with you," of our pious ancestors, is now lost in the accommodating, "Good-bye."

When we have put God out of our greetings, why do we retain such antiquated forms of homage to men, as "*Yours* respectfully?" "*Yours* to command," especially when there is not any shadow of meaning in them. Does not the word "yours" imply a servitude we do not feel, nor would not pay? "Your most obedient servant," is not yet an uncommon termination to business letters, and yet I think there are few American gentlemen, who could write it truthfully and consent to act upon it.

There are few things more interesting in studying nationalities, than the observation of the lingual changes which develop through national character. There is a very forcible

example of this in the "all right," with which an Englishman dismisses an enterprise, or satisfies an inquiry; and the "Go-ahead!" which condenses every American trait into its pushing, progressive, irresistible, little syllables.

XI

DAILY BREAD AND SPIRITUAL INFLUENCES

Bread is a gift of God. From its white crumb is made the crimson stream of life, the brawny muscle, the delicate flesh; yea, the very thoughts that breathe, and words that burn.

> To know
> That which before us lies in daily life,
> Is the prime wisdom.

I WAS in Cherry Croft among the mountains, yet I awoke one morning in an unusual mood of depression. I knew of no physical or domestic reason for it and I had neither ache nor pain. Yet I had not energy to do

the thing I wanted to do. Every duty seemed of no importance, and I looked at my work with indifference as if it was not mine. Sitting still with closed eyes, I let my thoughts take their own way, for my mind was busy enough.

"I have been dreaming," I reflected, and dreaming after Matthew Arnold's weary fashion, when painful unremembered dreams bring

> As from an infinitely distant land,
> A melancholy into all our day.

It must, however, have been a dream of unutterable desolation, for waking I could not even conceive of it; only its unhappy atmosphere remained with me.

It was a little thing which set my thoughts to a sensible restoration of many faculties—a plate of freshly baked rolls that had been brought to me with a little pitcher of new milk and my coffee. The aroma of the newly baked wheat, the beauty of the oval, finely browned rolls, appealed to me by a sudden remembrance of my

mother making rolls similar. I lifted one and put it to my lips. I did not want to eat it, but I wanted to feel closely its revivifying perfume, and the pleasant warmth that would come to me through the wonderful sense of touch.

This sense aroused the second sight of memory, and I saw plainly enough my mother making just such rolls nearly seventy years ago. She stood at a large deal table with the bowl of flour before her and covered from neck to feet with a holland pinafore. (What has become of holland?) I never see or hear of it now, yet when I was a girl it was in prominent family use. I actually made my reflection about holland in the middle of my reverie, and then returned to watch my mother kneading and working and tewing with the dough, till it was light and firm and waxy and full of little cells of air.

Breadmaking always had a fascination for me. I think it has for many children. I liked to watch the process and when I grew older and was learning to make bread, I asked why

the bread was so ill-used by the hands, and then Mother told me it was worked with human hands to put life into it. Bread must feel the human hand all through it, or it will be dead bread. "When I am sick, or much worried or depressed," she continued, "I do not make the bread. It would not be good bread. It would not be right for me to infect what all were to eat with my sickness or worry or perhaps my ill-temper."

I laughed at this supposition, and she nodded and smiled, and asked, "What kind of family are the Crowthers?"

"The most quarrelsome family you can imagine."

"What kind of a woman is Mrs. Crowther?"

"Why, mother, you know! No one can live with her."

"Well," continued mother, 'make living, healthy, good-tempered bread or do not make it at all."

When I was married, I went to my own home with positive ideas about my breadmak-

ing, but my first home was in Glasgow, and everyone bought ready-made bread in that city. The women made scones and oatmeal cakes and a variety of other cakes, but no bread. Then I came to America, and found the Irish girls in Chicago had their way of breadmaking and were not inclined to change it for my way; and I would not for any reason dispute the question with them.

Not until I reached Texas, did I find all favorable for the breadmaking I desired, except that we had no ovens. All had to be cooked in an iron skillet or pot about eight inches deep and standing a few inches above the hearth. It had a deep lid, and red-hot coals were put under the skillet and on the lid. I felt hopeless when I first saw the arrangement, but I soon discovered that it had peculiar excellencies, one of which was that it brought out and preserved in a most remarkable way the flavor of meats and flour.

And such flour as we had from the new fields of Texas! It is indescribable, because though

I may say its color was a pale gold and its richness quite evident to the eyes, no words can represent its strange faint perfume or its heavenly taste. Literally it might have been grown in Paradise. Those new fresh wheatfields have now been ploughed and sown and reaped for sixty-five years, and I wonder if the Texas flour is still ambrosia. Anyhow, I lived on it for twelve years, and I have no doubt I owe some flavor of mental or physical excellence to it.

By the time I had considered these past days of my life, with the numerous asides, personal and local, that flowed from them, I was *all there*. Whatever part of our wonderful, fearful being had been absent or asleep or reluctant or weary of its work, was now present and awake, and at its post, and I knew and felt it from head to feet.

I was then hungry, and I ate the rolls and drank the fresh milk at my side with eager pleasure and satisfaction, flavoring the material food with all kinds of delightful thoughts. I

wondered how the first field of ripe wheat looked to Adam and Eve. What did the young winds among the full yellow ears say to them? Had they not already found out that "eating bread in the sweat of the brow" was not the sentence of an angry God, but the promise of a sympathizing Father, appointing for all the sorrows of life *one* serious, certain comforter—daily work?

And what teeming harvests must have been gathered out of the generous breast of the young earth! What amazing granaries there were in Nineveh and Babylon and Egypt! And what incredible vitality was in this ancient grain, for I have seen growing under English skies wheat whose seed corn was taken from the cerements of a mummy that may have known Joseph or bowed before Pharaoh.

I thought, too, of the rich wheatfields of Palestine and of Ruth binding sheaves in them and of Solomon giving Hiram, King of Tyre, year by year, twenty thousand measures of wheat for food for his household. And from

there I made an easy travel through the rich wheatfields of northern Africa, Sicily and Italy. I remembered that the sacred chaplet of wheat ears is as old as the foundation of Rome and the first crown worn in that city of lost gods and godlike men. Acca Laurentia, the foster-mother of Romulus, crowned him with it, a brother of the first priesthood in the new state—the twelve guardians of the corn-fields.

How soon leavened bread was used is not known. Chaldea claims the discovery, but Egypt was acquainted with the process in the time of Moses, for he interdicted its use during the Passover. It is noticeable that public bakeries, though important in all ancient nations, have never been favored in Anglo-Saxon countries, until unusual growth compelled their service. When Manchester had a population of ninety thousand, she had not one baker's shop, and in all the small towns of England the majority of households made their own bread. And here I will give the four rules

that have for centuries guided the English housekeeper in her office as breadmaker:

I. Set all the sponge at once.

II. Have iron pans with very deep sides, to prevent the escape of the carbonic acid gas from the baking loaf.

III. Thorough and careful firing.

IV. Free exposure on every side to a current of cool air when taken out of the oven, in order to prevent the warm vapor which rises from hot bread condensing on the loaf.

If the family bread is bought from a public bakery, the best way of deciding on the excellence of different makers, is the following: Put a sample of the different breads in saucers, and pour clean water over each. The bread which absorbs the most water and weighs the heaviest is the best bread.

The following is a pretty bread charm from Herrick's "Hesperides," which is still faithfully followed wherever bread is home-made:

> This I tell you, by the way,
> Maidens when you leaven lay,

THREE SCORE AND TEN

Cross your dough and your dispatch,
Will be better for your batch.

I confess that I never made a batch of bread without doing so, but I did it because my mother always crossed her dough; and she did it because thousands of women had crossed their batch for centuries behind her.

Bread is the most potent factor in domestic and social life, and one of the most sacred oaths an Englishman could once take was, *"By bread and salt!"* Indeed the popular antipathy toward a man who broke this oath was so intense that it was most likely the reason why it has fallen into disuse. Yet it is not altogether forgotten, and I have read and heard of men dying during the long fight for the Reform Bill, pledging their sons by this oath, *"to stand for the Bill, by bread and salt!"*

Bread is an evident gift of God. A sacred mystery runs through it and it became in the life of Christ, an almost divine element. Christ likened the Kingdom of God to the leaven which a woman hid in three measures of meal

till the whole was leavened; and He frequently uses leaven as a symbol of good or evil doctrine influencing the soul of man. Both as food and symbol, Christ refers to bread very constantly, but in no place is the union so wonderful and pathetic as in that upper room where he ate his last meal with his disciples on that night—

> . . . when doomed to know
> The eager rage of every foe,
> That night in which he was betrayed,
> The Savior of the world took bread.
> And after thanks and glory given,
> To him that rules in earth and heaven,
> That symbol of his flesh he broke,
> And thus to all his followers spoke:—
> My broken body thus I give,
> For you, for all, take eat and live.
> And oft the sacred rite renew,
> That brings my wondrous love to view.

Is it not true then, that the most familiar incidents and factors of earthly life have intimate and illimitable connections with things heavenly and far beyond our comprehension? Certainly when I began to eat my roll of bread I never

thought it could call up such a reverie of little and great things.

* * * * * *

In July of this year, 1903, I finished my novel called "The Black Shilling." I was ill while writing it and unusually ill when it was finished. And I could not tell what was wrong. For the very first time I whispered to my diary that I must be growing old. My eyes troubled me so much I began to fear for my sight, and I was nervous and anxious for the days I had yet to meet. My trust in God wavered, and I found myself laying plans for the future, instead of leaving it in His care. I was, however, much in the dark, and could not read with any pleasure, and to be patient and sit still and wait was a new and great trial to me.

Near Christmas I went to the city and as soon as possible saw an oculist of high reputation. He laughed at my fears, told me to use my eyes in moderation, and assured me there was nothing to be troubled about. I had used them too much and they were weary, but recov-

ering rapidly. Surely some of my readers know how thankfully, wonderfully happy, I was for this assurance! If not, I have no words to tell them. I praised God all the way back to the hotel. I think I must have praised and thanked Him all night long, for I dreamed I did so.

Then the next day I began work moderately, and I have tried to be more kindly to my eyes ever since, bathing them before and after writing in boric acid water and giving them long rests in long vision and putting them into the blessed restorative of darkness very early each day. And somehow in thus looking after their welfare, I have learned to prize and love them as never before. What faithful, indefatigable, sympathetic friends they have been to me! They have wept in my sorrow, smiled in my pleasure, never failed me in my work, however weary they were. I have often looked at my hands, and loved them for their ready help; why not remember my eyes also and love them for their large share in it?

In a week I had forgotten my trouble. My eyes and my hands, worked busily with my heart and my brain, and I felt as if the world had been made over again. My friends looked curiously at me, so busy and happy with book or pencil. They could not understand my rapid recovery, and I hesitated about admitting that I had been largely suffering from fright and overdoing. Nevertheless it was a good lesson. It was well for me to learn in my early seventies to arrest myself on the first appearance of anything wrong in the physical body and to go at once to a physician of skill and authority. Had I done so, I would have saved myself many unhappy days and nights. It also taught me the folly of thinking of the worst that could happen, when that worst was far off and by no means sure.

So the trouble was over and I forgot it. If ever it came to my mind, I bathed my eyes or took five minutes' exercise of long vision, and then went back to work, happy in the consciousness that I had done a great kindness to myself

—and to do our duty to ourselves is a very important factor in the scheme of everyday life.

It was about a month afterwards that a young man, the son of an old friend, called on me. He came about some charity in which he was much interested, and told me he was shortly to be ordained for the ministry. I thought from his dress and conversation that he had already attained to that honor, and he seemed pleased at my mistake. He said he believed in keeping the clerical party a distinct and separate class. He thought they ought to dress differently from other men. And I had a quick flashing memory of the old Scotch woman, who "couldna approve of the new minister because he didna wear 'blacks' but just a bit tweed like her ain lads—and only a jacket! A jacket ye ken, wi' nae tails to it!"

I remembered the story, but I did not tell it to the young man. It would have been unkind. The straight white band at his throat, his long-skirted clerical coat, the spotlessness of his linen, his white scholarly hands, the slight yet

clearly marked tone of authority in his voice, would have made the Scotch woman's criticism offensive and inapropos. In fact, I rather liked his early acceptance of theological limitations. It argued well for his sense of the dignity of the office he was going to assume. And the young ought to be encouraged by the old in any right way they take. If they are doing well, they will do better, and life will teach them to excel even their own early estimate of whatever is lovely and of good report.

He stayed to dinner and spent the evening with me. He had a great deal to say, and much of it touched subjects that were dear and sacred to me, for he was thoroughly sincere and steeped in biblical and theological lore. I fancied that he was giving some of his knowledge and opinions a voice for the first time, and there is a fresh delightful charm in a young man's views on any subject. So I encouraged him to talk and by slight oppositions led him to open his mind and soul to me.

One of his ideas was unusual, but as it opens

a long vista of thought and observation, I believe others will be glad to share it. He began thus:

"I heard both father and mother say you were sick. I do not find you so."

"I was sick, fearing for my sight. A few words from Dr. H. cured me."

"Were you writing at the time?"

"Yes. I was very unhappy all the time. I was writing my last novel."

"Was it 'The Black Shilling'?"

"Yes."

"Then allow me to tell you that you made yourself sick and that you deserved to be sick for writing it. What right had you to keep your body and soul for months in the company of devils and witches? No wonder that both body and soul were sick. Why did you do it?"

"I had an order to write the book and I had to represent the time as it really was."

"So you reincarnated devils and witches and wicked men and even called them by their names. How could you do that?"

"I had a book that told me *how*."

"Then I do not think you ought to have such a book. I would destroy it—I would, indeed."

"Oh, no, Theodore," I said. "The book is historical, rare and valuable."

"You believe in the influence and power of angelic agency?"

"Certainly, I do."

"Good and evil angels, both?"

"Yes—s," I answered.

"You cannot avoid it. Does God open the eyes of our understanding? The devil is said to blind them. Are Christians filled with the spirit? 'Why,' says Peter to Ananias, 'Hath Satan filled thy heart?' Does God work in us to will and to do? Satan worketh in the children of disobedience."

"The subject of demoniacal possession is too big for our discussion," I answered, "and if it is bad for me to write about evil spirits, it will be still worse to talk of them."

"Not in the spirit of the conversation we

shall have. After reading 'The Black Shilling,' I made demoniacal possession my study. May I tell you what conclusions I came to?"

"I shall be glad to hear them. But do not carry your argument beyond the Word of God."

"There is no necessity to do so. There is even no necessity for any explanation of the statements made there. They may be taken just as written. Thus many great theologians assert that the possessed were lunatics. That they were not lunatics is evident from Matthew 4:24, where the diseased, the possessed and the lunatic are separately and distinctly named. We are also particularly told of several kinds of devils—deaf, dumb, unclean spirits of infirmity, etc.—all of which could not be classed under the word 'lunatic.' Neither was possession confined to the Jewish nation. In Acts 16:16, a damsel of Philippi in Macedonia had a spirit of divination. And what of Elymas the sorcerer whom Paul called 'thou child of the devil'—Acts 13:10?

"And," I added, "there is the strange relation of the seven sons of the Jew Seeva—Acts 19:14—and the equally remarkable case of the damsel of Thyatira, possessed by a spirit of divination—Acts 16:16."

"Mrs. Barr, we could go on indefinitely; the Bible is full of the influence of angels, good and evil, and tells us distinctly that our lives with all their changes of joy and sorrow, are a spectacle to men and angels."

"Do we have any manifestations of an evil agency at this day?" I asked.

"Those who have seen men possessed by the demons of drink, avarice, lust, anger, etc., have seen men whom 'the devil led captive at his will.' But good angels know no higher joy than service. They are helpers and comforters, whenever or wherever we read of them. Those who doubt this have not the knowledge which comes by suffering. They have not been brought low and been helped by such comforters. The broken in heart, the eyes washed and cleared by consecrating tears, the feet that

have been to the Border Land, *they know.*"

"But when you knew the danger?"

"O Theodore!" I cried. "You need not say another word. I believe in the Biblical doctrine of angelical agency just as it is written, without apology or reservation or explanation. And it is because I believe in it, I believe in the resurrection of the dead and the communion of saints. They are articles of the same creed—a creed we should tenderly cherish in an age when everything leans to materialization. There are plenty of Sadducees in our midst; we need not look back to ancient Jewry for them."

"Then tell me why you called evil intelligences round you?"

"They were the inciters of the people of whom I was writing. I never thought of them influencing me."

"If you spend a day or two in anxious, angry thought, how do you feel after the experience?"

"Sick and unhappy, of course."

"There was a good man called Mulford, who

said, 'Thoughts are things.' These words deserve to be imperishable words. I hope you will excuse my speaking to you so freely."

"Surely, but I must remind you that you have only looked on one side of your question. I was in the way of my duty. I was showing to this generation the awful sin and the awful punishment of any alliance with evil agencies. That was the object and lesson of my book. Yes, and I will tell you, that after writing 'The Lion's Whelp' I was radiantly well and happy. Yet it was a still more difficult and exhaustive work, and kept me at high strain four months longer than 'The Black Shilling.' But in 'The Lion's Whelp,' I had been living with great and heroic men and women. Cromwell inspired me with his own grand faith in God and his native land. I breathed an atmosphere of religious glory and patriotism. I dwelt among men and women whom it was good to know. Such writing does not weary. It strengthens and vivifies.

"It is the same with books. I will not have

a book in my library that takes me into a low or sinful atmosphere. I do not give such away. I burn them. A good book is a dear friend. I love it and want it well treated. A turned leaf, a pencil mark, a stain or tear in it hurts me like a personal insult. For I cannot divide the book from the writer. Some good loving man or woman pressed his or her soul on its white pages, and I feel as if they were unkindly and rudely treated if these pages are torn or defaced."

"Then why do you keep books such as you used in 'The Black Shilling'?"

"They are professional books. None of them were personal. A physician has many books that are highly necessary in his treatment of disease that he would not think of putting in his private library. Do you understand?"

"Yes, then what was the matter with you?"

"My faith failed me. I feared for my sight and there was not a particle of reason for fear. However, I do not much regret those few weeks

of anxiety and physical suffering and sense of ill-being."

"I do not comprehend your position—to be ill and in pain, and not regret it. Explain to me. I can believe anything you have experienced."

"Well, then, happiness and high spirits have a centrifugal attraction, which unconsciously diffuses and dissipates us. It would evaporate and restore us to the elements if we abandoned ourselves to it. Pain and anxiety bring back all to the center, draw the soul upon itself, knit the body closer, and insure and fortify existence. Pain fashions us with the fine edge of a pitiless chisel; it limits the overflowing of life, and makes what remains stronger, finer, richer."

"And you have proved this to be a sure result?"

"Yes. Someone said to me he found himself irremediably damaged by a sickness. That is not my experience. I have never felt better than I do now. Yet I am just from a darkened

room, full of fears and depressing pain. Then the hour came when I could throw off this garment of heaviness, and I felt twenty years younger than when I finished 'The Black Shilling.'"

"Of course. You were tired out then."

"Yes, and in darkness and much solitude I gave my soul and body time to rest and gather their forces together. It seems clear and reasonable enough to me."

"I do not exactly see it so." He began to argue the subject further, and I said,

"Nay, we will let it rest where I left it. In twenty years, come and see me about the position and I think that there will be no argument."

"Twenty years!"

"Yes. We will take up the subject then, if necessary."

"But—but——"

I saw the thought in his face but I did not answer it. He wanted to remind me, to enlighten me—he was so young I could not help

smiling into his yet boyish face, and as I walked with him to the elevator, I thought of Joubert's advice, "Address yourself to young people. They know everything!"

XII

CARRYING ON THE DUTIES OF THE DAY

Know when to start afresh and dare to do it. Do not be deterred by what it is necessary to undo.

There are inner voices, and we may not be sure if our own, or not. Often things are said in us that we instantly and angrily repudiate. Again, suggestions from Higher Spirits are made unexpectedly; we are taken apart, and spoken to, in secret. It is perhaps well, that we believe our thoughts to be all our own.

I HAD finished two novels this year—"The Man Between" and "The Heart of Jessy Laurie," and was in the hotel in New York for the winter. My rooms had been partially refurnished and were bright with sunshine and

firelight, and I was feeling well and happy and just ready to go to the Historical Society Library, when Mary entered the room. I had not seen much of her during the past summer for I was on the west shore of the Hudson and she was on the east shore and communication was not very easy. But a few weeks', or even months' silence, made no coolness in our friendship. We trusted each other's love fully and never insulted it by fretful enquiries or self-wounding doubts.

So she came into my parlor smiling with outstretched hands and quite sure of her welcome. Something had rejuvenated her. She looked not only without care, but full of hope; the first is a placid happiness, but the second is a joyful one. Also, she was carefully and stylishly dressed, and though still in black, the material was satin with bright touches at the neck of pale violet. White lace had taken the place of white crape at her throat, and her black gloves had been changed to the same shade as her ribbons.

I looked at her with admiration and said as I kissed her, "What a handsome friend I have in you, Mary!" and she nodded her head and whispered something I need not repeat.

"But what have you been doing to yourself?" I asked.

"Making myself busy and so you see the result. I want to tell you about it."

"Are you going to be married again?"

"I have all my senses yet, Amelia."

"What then, dear?"

"You have heard me speak of my cousin, Pamela Hunter?"

"Yes, a very bright active woman, brought up on her father's farm in the New Hampshire mountains, was she not?"

"Pamela is a miracle of skill and fine sense. She brought with her to this life a number of excellent qualities, and one perfect art—that of millinery. It was simply marvelous what she could do with scraps of lace and ribbon and much-used flowers when she was a child. As she grew to womanhood she managed to

perform her every duty on the farm and yet get up quite a little trade among her neighbors. At last she had fifty dollars and she came to New York with it, and I took her to Louise, and as we sat with the famous artist in lace and straw, Louise pushed a hat toward Pamela and the girl trimmed it before our eyes in the most charming manner. Louise smiled and engaged her at once.

"She has been with Louise five years and I have kept in touch with her because she took dinner with me every other Sunday night. One afternoon last July, she said as we sat talking, 'Mary, I am going to leave Louise. I have two thousand dollars now, and the very shop I want is at my disposal.' 'Two thousand is not enough,' I said, 'not nearly.' 'I can get three thousand credit,' she answered. Then I told her that would not do, it was too much weight to carry, and without a moment's thought I said, 'Take me for your partner. I will put five thousand in the business.' Well, Pamela, I really think, was excited and de-

lighted for the very first time in her life, and we talked out the whole affair that night, though it was Sunday, and arranged that my name should not appear, so I am only a silent partner."

"Then I smiled and Mary smiled, and she continued, 'Silent or not, I have my full say about everything that is bought or done; and it was I that chose the name of our firm. I said there was only one form for it and I wrote it large to impress her—'Pamela's Hats and Bridal Veils.' For Pamela has a wonderful touch about bridal veils. She arranges them, not by any mode or fashion, but by the bride's individuality, taking into consideration her face, complexion, figure, etc. Really there are seldom two alike. The bridal veil is one of our specialties. We make a lot of money by it."

"And this business is a reality? You amaze me, Mary!"

"It has been a reality for six months; it is now a successful reality. Amelia, I had to

marry or do something. I had that constant do-nothing headache of aimless, idle life, or else those day-dreams of melancholy women who think and think of things impossible. I began to think myself old and of no use to anyone."

"You have chosen the best of all ways to be happy, Mary. Suppose you are three score! I say with the wisest of the ancients, 'Let the old work and make money.' For whom? you ask. I give you the answer of an old Grecian: 'for the immortal gods who intended that I should not only receive my possessions from my ancestors, but also transmit them to my descendants.' "

"The old Grecian was quite right. I have Jack and his children. And in this business I am neither feeble nor inactive. I am the treasurer of Pamela's and I am always doing or devising something for its advantage."

"How old are you, Mary?"

"Really, dear, I am sixty-two, but I think of myself as sixty."

"Well then, it is yet with you high day.

"Your staff resume
And fight flesh battles for the right;
For what is Age but youth's full bloom
And riper more transcendent youth.
And weight of gold,
Is never old;
Streams broader grow as downward rolled,
At sixty-two Life has begun,
At seventy-three begins once more,
Fly swifter as thou near'st the sun,
And brighter shine at eighty-four.
At ninety-five,
Should'st thou arrive,
Still wait on God, and work and thrive."

"Thank you, Amelia! It is possible, and therefore I may bring it to pass. Work will save me. Before I joined Pamela, life had lost all its interest. There seemed nothing new to hope for. I had been loved and married, I had been sick and got well, I had been poor and was rich, and the only things left me were the pleasures of use and wont and of having things familiar round me. My offer to Pamela was a new thing in my life. Some-

thing to do has been my salvation. I am a better woman every way for it."

"My dear Mary, there is nothing good in this world that Time does not make better. Work was the earliest gospel, and to know your work and do it is the latest gospel. Life in New York is life on the march and the best foot forward."

"Pamela has always been a great worker and I am going to be one. I am learning bookkeeping—straight, old-fashioned, honest bookkeeping by double entry. I will have every dot and figure right in our books."

"Mary, you amaze and delight me. What a lot of good profitable work the world has lost in your tardy beginning. I wish you had told me six months ago."

"It would not have done. You are a downright Faintheart in business, Amelia. If you make a hit, it is because your work by its own force and fortune outsteps you. I do not believe you could have given me good advice about business."

"Very likely you are right, but I could have given you three business precepts, by a man whose wisdom is a proverb."

"Solomon?"

"Yes."

"What does he say?"

" 'Be steadfast in thy covenant or contract, and be conversant therein, and wax old in thy work.' [Ecclesiasticus 11:20.] 'His eyes are upon them that fear him, and he knoweth every work of man.' [Ecclesiasticus 15:19.] 'In every good work, trust thy own soul.' [Ecclesiasticus 32:23.]"

"I can trust Pamela as well. She is upright throughout."

"What a grand old English word 'upright' is! It is all you need say of any man. When we are told that the man of Uz was 'upright' we knew that he feared God and eschewed evil."

"That is Pamela."

"What will your son say?"

"Jack thinks money-making excuses trading.

He thinks I have done right. The women do not yet know."

"If Jack knows, his wife knows. Make yourself sure of that."

"I care not who knows. I am doing right. It does me good to make money. Even if I had no one to give it to there is always the poor and needy. Before I began this business, everything seemed so old and commonplace. All the light was out of life."

"Well, Mary, age either transfigures or petrifies. It is not that its joys cease, but that its hopes cease. You have bought with your money indefinite hopes, future plans and prospects, and years of action and feeling. For our greatest happiness lies in the doing, in getting the mastery over difficulties and putting hindrances out of the way. Do you feel that this is a nobler life than you might claim from age with its tender notes and sunken lights and melancholy music of experience? Would you like to keep busily at work as long as you are able? Or would you desire to de-

cline into old age, calmly as the setting of a constellation?"

"I wish to keep active as long as I live."

"And you will live the longer for keeping active. There is just one way, Mary, of getting ready for the next life, it is to live this life as wisely and cheerfully and bravely as we can. When courage droops, the body stoops, faith declines, and the flesh languishes."

"Do you ever expect to grow old, Amelia?"

"I think the soul may grow younger, as the body grows older. There is no age to the immortal part of us."

"I keep in age, as in my prime,
A not uncheerful step with Time;
I trust the path I cannot see,
That God is Love sufficeth me;
I only pray,
That Hope may lose itself in Truth.
And age, in heaven's immortal Youth."

"And you propose to keep on working as you do now?"

"I intend to live as I have always done, only

in more and more moderation. I wish to feel alive to the last moment, to preserve my vigor of mind and ready sympathy in all that happens, and when the end comes I do not doubt that the God of my whole life will comfort me, and I shall fall asleep in the sure and certain hope of that Eternal Life, my faith has always promised me. In the meantime, what each day wills, the day will tell,

> "and what lies before my feet,
> My notice shall engage;
> They who have braved Youth's dizzy heat,
> Dread not the frost of Age."

"Now that we are talking on this subject, tell me, Amelia, how you keep so generally in fit health for all you do."

"To think is to live. If you keep the mind active it will keep the body out of mischief and make stagnation very difficult. But, Mary, to keep young and healthy, you must know how to rest as well as how to work and more than all, to be strong in that weakness which teaches us to trust in the Not Ourselves."

"I have often read of the world's great men who have done great work after eighty."

"That is no wonder. Does any one of us know,

> "How far the gulf stream of our Youth may flow,
> Into the Arctic regions of our lives?"

"Mary, is there any necessity for us to grow old at all? Is it not a bad habit? When I was a girl I saw men of eighty and ninety years old managing a cotton mill or taking care of dog kennels of great value, and I knew one Westmoreland squire who was master of a hunt when his great-grandsons trolled after him among the horses in his stable. I remember this man so well because his fine broadcloth coat was trimmed with large gold buttons, each of them having the likeness of a favorite hound on it."

"Well, I suppose if a man is among his looms or his dogs or his horses, he does not feel old. He forgets his age."

"That is the point, but if a man thinks he is old, he is old. Let a man retire from busi-

ness and Nature will agree and retire him. Let a woman think she is too old to fulfill her usual social duties, and society will agree with her. Age is opportunity, no less than youth; yet,

"God marks how long this human life shall be;
How grandly broad, ho whigh towards heaven,
He leaves to Thee."

"Have you ever noticed, Mary, that it is the young who fear death, not the old?. The man or woman who has done a good life's work and still keeps busy is not afraid. He or she is ready to go or ready to stay, and usually stays a long while."

"You have made me very well content with myself, Amelia. I know now that I am on the right road for a happy and useful life. But if work is the foundation, what are the pillars?"

"Well, long livers must be great hopers. The sanguine live the longest. They must avoid all sorrow that helps nothing. They must acquiesce patiently in the inevitable and if unwelcome changes come they must not

". . . make dark their countenance,
And shut their soul from happy chance.

"Our business in the world is to succeed in our work, but if we fail, let us fail in good spirits and with the cheerfulness of common gratitude, for all that we have received."

"I believe you think, Amelia, that the most dangerous retreat an old man or woman can find, is the chimney-corner."

"I think, at any rate, that the surest way to grow old is to be afraid of growing old. Mary, a friend sent me an account of a fine old man and I will read it to you. If you and I grow to be worthy of such an obituary we shall not have lived in vain." Then I went to my desk for the little document and read her the following words:

"He was a fine old man, even at ninety years of age, full of energy, and no one ever saw him assume the indifference of a man tired of life. He stood at his post, looking before him with a steadfast eye to the hour when he quietly passed away to learn the secret of another world. To the last he took an interest not only in his own affairs, but in everything that appealed

to mankind. He did not stop short in old age and look back; he advanced with the century in which he was born."

"How beautiful!" cried Mary. "Why should we not live as he did?"

"If we try to do so, we shall succeed. There is no reason why we should not."

"Really, Amelia, you talk about old age as if it was a perversion, an abnormal state of mind and body."

"It is, if we can only keep up our enthusiasms. Enthusiasm is always as young as an apple blossom."

"But enthusiasms are the property of youth."

"Not exclusively. Not at all. You are sixty-two and as enthusiastic about your new work as if you were nineteen. If an old man or woman is enthusiastic about any public event, who can match them? They are more unreasonable than any youth. For instance, if ever the reasonable brain runs mad about politics or religion, it is usually the brain of

one who knows life and who feeds his enthusiasm from his own suffering and experience. What are written words or spoken words to personal feeling?"

"Still, I think it is the young who have great enthusiasms."

"Well, then, keep young through sympathy with the young. It has long been said that the young should live much with those older than themselves, and the old with those younger than they are. Catch all the enthusiasm you can from the young, but above and beyond all else keep living and active your enthusiasm for work."

"I shall, indeed. I mean to work as long as I can in this world. I can rest afterward."

"No, you cannot. For the righteous there is no rest, either in this life or the next. They are to go on from host to host, from striving to striving. That is our soul's desire and destiny.

"It asks no isles of the blest, no quiet seats of the just,
To rest in a golden grove, or bask in a summer sky."

"It prays

"God give me the wages of going on, and not to die."

"Amelia, you make me very hopeful and happy. I feel as if now all was well with me."

"There will, of course, be times when you will think all is not well with you. Men will look to that result, but take everything calmly before the world; you can cry to God and He will hear and help you; but as regards this world, the only man or woman worth anything is the man or woman who can smile when everything seems to be going dead wrong."

"That is what you do."

"It is what I try to do."

"And you are so happy that you have happiness to give away to others."

"Yes."

"My age still keeps the dew of morn,
And what I have I give;
Being right glad that I was born,
And thankful that *I* live."

And the look that answered me was full of an intelligent, joyful understanding. There

was no need to discuss the subject further and I began to ask her about her son and his five daughters. In the afternoon we had a drive and passed Pamela's, and there were two carriages at the door, and Mary looked at me with a pleasant remark in her eyes and round her lips; and I gave up the whole day to her and was glad to do it. And it was a good day to me and that night I had a dream, a tender, beautiful dream, that still glorifies the day in my memory; and I did as the wise and good Cicero says he did: "I thanked God for my happy dream, as I did for my good rest."

Mary remained with me all night, and bright and cheerful joined me at my early breakfast. "You look happy, Amelia," she said. "Have you had a good dream?"

"That is just it, Mary, but how did you know?"

"Your face tells everything. You are an open book to those who love you."

"At any rate, you have read me well this morning, for

"If I may trust the flattering eye of sleep,
My dreams portend some joyful news at hand,
My bosom's lord sits lightly on his throne."

"I have been dreaming, also. I was in a large company. They were my friends, but I knew none of them and yet I did know them. We seemed at home, but there was that mystical sense of a life not this life. They had the familiarity of kindred and yet they were not kin."

"We have kindred to whom we are spiritually related. You and I are far from kindred, Mary, as the world counts kindred, but I think our souls are very closely connected. We must remember that our lives stretch before and behind us, following our souls in their endless ways of reminiscence and anticipation. What is past is not forgotten; and now and then we find in dreamland what is not in life."

"Why do people believe in dreams?"

"Because of the reality of the spiritual world, we have an instinctive belief in it."

"Not all people."

"We spend a quarter of our time dreaming. How can people think it is of no consequence? Dreams are the most curious asides and soliloquies of the soul. They are the truest confessional and the sharpest penance, because when dreaming, our will is quiescent and we *reveal ourselves.* And there are prophesying dreams. Come how it may, dreams *do* read the future. There are subtle lines between spirit and spirit that we know nothing about. A century ago who would have thought of sending a message through the air from New York to San Francisco? Such messages are now mere trade. That a man in New York should talk to a man in Chicago was a hundred years ago more incredible than that spirit should talk with spirit. The divine speak to us in dreams and by the oracles that abide in darkness. Dreams are large possessions."

"Some people do not dream at all."

"Such people are of low mentality, or they have some tendency to brain. trouble which may develop in late life. I knew a very great

scholar who never dreamt until he was an old man. Then he had one remarkable dream which affected him in the most powerful manner. 'I shall preach no more,' he said, and before the next Sabbath he had a stroke of apoplexy. To this man, profoundly pious and learned, the dream was a veritable message from his Master. Dreams are expansion, enlightenment and discipline. They extend our self-knowledge. They are the rudiments of the great state to come. How far we see in dreams! How much we can do! What wonders and what miracles we are able to perform!

"The soul never seems to get tired. However weary the body is, the soul is off and away as soon as sleep opens the portals of the body. And if for any reason a man or woman is afflicted with insomnia, how the soul suffers in her enforced confinement! Indeed, insomnia, if prolonged, ends in madness or some other kind of mental breakdown. The soul must have a few hours' release from its earthly

prison, or there is mental insurrection or disease of some kind.

"We seem to be something more than ourselves in dreams. I heard of a man who stutters when awake, but whose oratory is wonderful when asleep. There is a woman in my set who cannot dance when she is awake but who declares her dancing while she is dreaming is far more graceful and beautiful than anything she ever saw or conceived of while awake. And an inventor told me that he found his work easy if he could dream about it.

"St. Columba prayed in his dreams, and there are good men and women and little children who do so every day. Blessed are they! Their's is the Kingdom of Heaven.

"Still there are men, and women, too, who laugh if you talk seriously of dreaming, or even attribute any serious event or consequence to it. Such people are wanting the faculty; they were never in deeper dreamland. They may have been in the silly, fragmentary suburbs of it, but if they had ever had one *real*

dream, they would know and regret their ignorance. A true dream comes true, every time. Those favored to receive them, dream of what is going to happen to them, and it does happen. However, if the doubting man or woman have within them no supernatural element, neither angel nor yet miracle could authenticate the supernatural to them."

"But dreams do come true, Amelia?"

"They have done so for six thousand years, and they who question this fact cannot believe their Bible and have not even a common historical faith. And, Mary, dreams have a general good influence on life. Cannot you imagine how dull and commonplace life would be if we could see the end from the beginning; but the revealing *in part* is like a curve on a highway. If we could see beforehand everything that would happen to us, how stale and unsatisfactory even great things would be, when we arrived at them!"

"More than that, Amelia, we should not be pleased with them. Suppose I had known pos-

itively four years ago I should be in the millinery business today, do you think I would have liked the knowledge? But I did not know it, but when I came to it, I found the millinery affairs just what I needed."

"Yet we are always craving to know the future, and dreams soothe this craving without showing the whole at once. They are like curves on our road. As the path winds, we know that something new will meet us at the turning, and because God is good and has always been kind, we look for something pleasant; and if a dream, that has always been a good dream to us, happens again, we are full of hope and expectation, and we get what we look for. That is the good of a good dream. Again I say with the wise old Roman I thank God for my good dreams, as well as for my good sleep. And there is another old man whom Plutarch names whose saying about our sleep and dreams always pleased me. I heard my father quote it when I was twelve years old, and I have never forgotten it."

"Tell it to me, dear."

" 'All men while they are awake are in one common world; but when we sleep and dream, we are each of us in a world of our own.' As a child I liked that thought. Having a world all to myself did not alarm me then."

With these words we left the dining-room and went upstairs. Mary looked restless and I said, "Do you wish to go now, Mary?"

"Oh, no," she answered. "I will stay with you another hour."

"Then we might go over the dreamland of the Old Testament."

"I know every foot of it."

"Well, dear, the simple, severe hold upon the unseen and the future, which is the color, breadth and form of the New Testament, is worth an hour's consideration."

"Not this morning. I know it is marvelous and the Man of Nazareth as the center of its dream life appeals so strongly to me that I do not wish to talk more about dreams. The living, pushing, working world is calling me,

and I was just thinking I would leave you early and have a ride round the park and try and find my everyday self. We can renew the subject some other time. You understand, dear?"

Of course I understood, but I also knew that the material and spiritual were closely allied and that neither could be innocently tithed of its due. So Mary began to talk of business and Pamela's, and the clock struck nine. "Now I will go," she said, "in half an hour, and I wanted so much to hear your opinion of the change in my dress."

"I like it—as far as it goes."

"I could not go further—yet."

"Why not?"

"It does not seem right."

"How is it wrong?"

"Well, I am an old woman and I have lost my husband and I ought to respect his memory. The world and my children and friends expect it."

"Did your husband ask you to wear black

in his memory? He was the very best of good husbands, he loved to see you beautifully dressed, he was always glad when you were happy and pleased. I don't believe he ever did or said an unkind thing to you. Why should you remember him in black, ugly garments? If he has put on everlasting shining white, why should you wear black?"

"People generally in every nation wear some distinctive color for the dead. The Chinese wear yellow. The Hebrews wore sackcloth."

"We heard of no sackcloth after Christ's time. My husband and four sons died in one year. I did not wear an inch of black in their memory. No, indeed! I rejoiced for them, so early called and blessed! And for myself, I had the everlasting God for my Helper."

"What do you want me to do, Amelia?"

"I only want you to follow the lines that Nature so plainly shows you. In the spring, she dresses herself in delicate greens and star-like flowers, mostly of white or primrose. So

girls ought to dress—in delicate shades of white or green or primrose. As the summer advances we get more splendid coloring, more complex and beautiful flowers. The rose makes sweet the world, and every garden is a little drama of scent and color. But, Oh, when autumn arrives! Then earth indeed puts on her beautiful garments. Then she revels in glorious colors of every shade. Our gardens are aflame with poppies and dahlias and chrysanthemums of every tint. Then she clothes even the trees and hedges in royal pomp and makes her sun set in such heavenly splendor as the spring or summer never dreamed of. It is to the aged year she gives this magnificence of color, making the year's last days a gorgeous pageant, like a state ceremonial of honor.

"It is age, Mary, that calls for and merits beautiful garments and resplendent gems. Youth does not require them and has not had time to earn them by any gift or effort or sweet service of Love. But the woman who has

been wife and mother and fought her way through a sea of troubles and come out safe on the other side, who has suffered and triumphed over every sorrow, clothe her in rich raiment and lovely colors and make her last days as radiant and beautiful as they ought to be."

"I know you are right, generally speaking, Amelia, but when I am shopping or at Pamela's, what then?"

"Wear a dark color, plainly made. It need not be black—but at home, and among your friends, wear light, cheerful colors, Mary. Dark colors are bad-tempered and also very unhealthy. It is hard to be cross in heavenly blue or in a pink gown like the blush of the dawning. The gods of the household, 'who are good little gods,' are undoubtedly dressed in blue or pink, and just as surely black and dull browns and dreary grays are as hateful to them as worrying and bad temper."

Mary laughed. "Oh," she said, "do you remember the old lady you fell in love with on

the one night I ever coaxed you to the opera."

"I have never forgotten her. She was fully my age. She entered her box leaning on the arm of her grandson. She was tall, erect, with a smiling beautiful face. She wore a gown of white brocaded satin, and a wrap of pale violet brocaded satin trimmed with ermine. Diamonds held in position the laces at her throat, and diamond ornaments kept her carefully dressed snow-white hair in its exquisite order. I thought her the most fittingly dressed woman in the house."

"Dear Amelia, I like your ideas. I am going to have some pretty gowns made immediately."

"I hope you will. The custom of expecting people to wear black when their relations die is one of those horrid, old, sumptuary laws, that belong to the uncivilized."

"I have often wondered at your love for white and light colors. Now I know your reasons, I share your taste."

And after Mary had gone I sat thinking

over the subject, and I came to the settled conclusion that we should live longer and much more happily if we changed our modes of work and pleasure, of food and sleep and dress just as little as possible. I would say to all men and women over sixty years of age:

O Heart! Strong Heart, put on thy autumn glow,
A richer red, after the rainy weather;
Mourn not for Spring, for the lost long ago,
But clothe thy cliffs with purple honeyed heather.

XIII

SINGING IN THE WILDERNESS

O be joyful in the Lord all ye lands, serve the Lord with gladness, and come before his presence with a song.

Be ye sure that the Lord he is God, it is he that hath made us, and not we ourselves; we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture.

O go your way into his gates with thanksgiving, and into his court with praise; be thankful unto him, and speak good of his Name.

For the Lord is gracious, his mercy is everlasting, and his truth endureth from generation to generation.

I heard a hymn in a church I was passing, it was like a stream of fresh gurgling water crossing the dusty street.

THREE SCORE AND TEN

THIS morning, December seventh, I was looking for a verse in the Gospels and could not find it; then a verse I was not looking for *found me* and I sat still in a kind of breathless surprise at the words, "and when they had sung a hymn, they went out into the Mount of Olives."

When they had sung a hymn! The words stood out clearly from the text, they seemed to speak to me, and I said them over and over as if I had just seen them for the first time in my life. Christ praying, Christ preaching, Christ working miracles, was a familiar well-known Christ; but Christ singing was unknown to me. It was a fresh and beautiful phase of his personality with which I must at once make acquaintance. I forgot what I was looking for, put aside the work that had been interesting me, and sat still awhile, considering the new thought that had just been granted.

Backward and forward my mind traveled,

almost losing itself in the very abundance of the lovely and magnificent storage of hymns with which sweet singers of humanity have enriched the world. At the creation only the stars and the sons of God sang God's praises; but now there is no speech nor language among men where hymns of praise and love and thanksgiving do not constantly rise to the Creator and Lover of men.

Among the Jewish nation singing has always been an important part of religious exercise. As soon as they had accomplished the passage of the Red Sea, "then sang Moses and the children of Israel this song unto the Lord, and spake, saying, I will sing unto the Lord, for he hath triumphed gloriously: the horse and his rider hath he thrown into the sea.

"The Lord is my strength and song, and he is become my salvation: he is my God . . . my father's God, and I will exalt him.

"The Lord is a man of war: the Lord is his name." [Exodus 15:1-3.]

When the fullness of time had come, the

angels learned a new song, and introduced the dispensation of love and mercy with singing; and when the Great Sacrifice was ready to be offered up, before he entered into the silent agony of Gethsemane, he gathered the companions of his soul's travail around him, comforted them, prayed for them, and then sang a hymn with them. Oh, to have heard Christ sing! We cannot help wondering with a holy curiosity what hymn it was. Was it one of the Passover Psalms which included all from the one hundred and thirteenth to the one hundred and eighteenth? Was it some translation of the songs of Heaven? But never will the world hear again such singing as filled the echoes of that upper chamber. Christ was going to agony and death, he knew it, and he sang a hymn when he parted with his friends.

I had arrived at this reflection when Professor B. called. No one could have been more welcome. "Come in, Professor," I said gladly. "I want you very much. No one can help me just now as well as you can."

Then he removed his coat and hat and sat down, and I told him what I have just told my readers.

"It is the only time we read of Christ singing, is it not?" I asked.

"But doubtless Christ sang, as well as prayed, with a constant regularity. Yet this hymn had a special purpose beyond either his disciples or his own spiritual comfort. This supper was the abrogation of the Passover supper and an emphatic recognition of singing as part of the religious service of the Christian faith and from the very first it was so regarded. When Mary sang, 'My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit hath rejoicing in God my Savior,' then the keynote of Christian psalmody was struck."

"What did the early church sing?"

"The Psalms of David were doubtless sung, but with all their beauty there was a want in them which the first Christians would imperatively feel—the want of Christ. Hence the earliest hymns—those of the Eastern Church

—are steeped in the spirit of Jesus. They breathe his tenderness, implore his help, and magnify his work."

"Were they metrical?"

"No. This in my opinion adds to their grandeur. Can anything be more magnificent than the Gloria in Excelsis. Yet this was the triumphant hymn which the early Confessors sang as they marched from prison to martyrdom. The hymn in the Communion Service beginning, 'Therefore with angels and archangels' is of equal antiquity."

"O Professor!" I cried. "I have heard that hymn sung often in the great cathedrals of England and my soul mounted upward on it as on angels' wings. It is sung or recited just after the bread and wine has been partaken of and the whole congregation are kneeling. Then the Bishop turns to the Lord's Table, and says, 'It is meet and right, and our bounden duty, to give thanks,' and as one man the whole congregation rise and as one glad voice sing or intone the grateful, glorious words, and

many must really feel at that hour that they 'with Angels and Archangels and with all the company of heaven, laud and magnify thy glorious Name, evermore praising Thee, and saying, Holy, Holy, Holy Lord God of Hosts, heaven and earth are full of thy glory! Glory be to thee, O Lord Most High! Amen.'

"O Professor, I can hear as I speak the deep, tender volume of sound rising on the triumphant tones of the organ, up and up, till I lose it in the great spaces above me."

"No, you did not lose it. You have it yet in your memory."

"I thank God for that. Oh, may He keep my memory green all the days of my life! Do you know anything more of the hymnologists of the early church?"

"The Oriental Church had many writers of hymns, all uniting the highest poetical merit with the most devout piety. Ephraim of Edessa is the most famous. What bereaved mother would care to see in meter such exquisite lines as these:

"The Just One saw that iniquity increased on the earth,
And that sin had dominion over all men,
And sent his messengers, and removed
A multitude of fair little ones,
And called them to the pavillion of happiness.
Like lilies taken from the wilderness,
Children are planted in Paradise.
And like pearls in diadems,
Children are inserted in the Kingdom.

"In the early Greek hymns Christ is the Alpha and Omega, for no hymn without the name of Jesus could satisfy hearts, to whom Jesus was all in all."

"Do you remember any of them, Professor?"

"Listen and write them:

"Thou who on the sixth day and hour,
Didst nail to the Cross the sin
Which Adam dared in Paradise;
Rend also the handwriting of our transgression.
O Christ our God, and save us!

"Most sweet Jesus! Long suffering Jesus!
Heal the wounds of my soul
Jesus, and sweeten my heart.
I pray thee most merciful Jesus, my Saviour,
That I saved, may magnify thee.

"Just such hymns as these the beloved disciple listened to in his old age before rising to say, 'Little children love one another.' The next two verses I will give you are very dear to me. They are metrical and were probably written about A. D. 600.

"If I ask Him to receive me,
Will He say me nay?
Not till earth, and not till heaven,
Pass away!

"Fighting, losing, hoping, fearing,
Will He love and bless?
Priests, Apostles, Martyrs, Angels,
Answer, *Yes.*

"The doxology of the Eastern Church is also very beautiful and explicit:

"God is my hope.
Christ is my refuge.
The Holy Ghost is my vesture.
Holy Trinity glory to Thee!"

"I suppose the Latin hymns would come next?"

"Yes, and their remarkable feature is their subjectivity. They are as evidently the result

of personal experience, as are the Psalms of David. The hymns of Ambrose stand first in the Latin Church. He introduced responsive chanting but he did not originate it, for centuries before Ambrose, the Psalms of David had responded to each other in alternate verses, from each side of the brazen altar."

"Do you remember anything he wrote?"

"My dear friend, from the lips of Ambrose, the Te Deum burst in an ecstasy of adoration after baptizing St. Augustine; and all his hymns have the same grand simplicity, the same gathered strength. They are an altar built of unhewn stones. St. Augustine was no mean poet, and that restless monk, Barnard of Clairvaux, amid the tumult of his times, the preaching of a crusade, and the founding of an order, found time to write many verses that the Christian church will never forget. For instance:

"Jesu, the hope of souls forlorn,
How good to them for sin that mourn!
To them that seek thee, O how kind!
But what art Thou to them that find?

"Sweetness that may not be expressed,
And altogether loveliest!

"I think, but am not quite sure, that Barnard wrote that fine hymn beginning, 'In the Cross of Christ I glory.' You can look that up some day. In A. D. 911, a monk called Notker wrote a Latin antiphon from which the burial service of the English Church took the line, 'In the midst of life we are in death.' Notker's antiphon also forms the groundwork of Luther's antiphon, De Morte."

"Professor, do you know who wrote the Stabat Mater?"

"That tearful, passionate invocation was written by Jacobus de Benedictus. It belongs to the productions of the medieval church, when her hymnology had become infused with prayers to Mary and the saints. Other writers of this age are King Robert II of France who wrote the Veni Sancto Spiritus and many lovely hymns, and Thomas de Celano whose fame rests on the unearthly magnificence, and passionate personality of the Dies Irae."

"In religious power and awful sublimity, it is the greatest and simplest of hymns," I said.

"Yes, the power of words can go no further in expressing the shuddering consciousness of needed mercy, the awful majesty of heaven, the imploring intensity of a soul urging,

> "Low I kneel with heart submission,
> See, like ashes, my contrition,
> Help me in my last condition!

"and urging that help, on the plea that

> "Faint and weary thou hast sought me,
> On the Cross of Suffering bought me,
> Shall such grace be vainly brought me?"

"When was it written, Professor?"

"It was known in the middle of the thirteenth century, and the Romish Church introduced it into their burial service A. D. 1385. It forms the Sequence for the Dead, and in this capacity is sung with overpowering majesty in the great Sistine Chapel. Many New Yorkers of the present day have doubtless heard it there. If they have they will never forget it."

"I know that it has been often translated. Whose translation is the best?"

"I should think there are at least ninety English translations. Crashaw, born A. D. 1616, first rendered it in English, and his version has never been equaled in strength, but the meter is not like the original. Lord Roscommon's translation is remarkable for its pious fervor. He died with two lines of it on his lips:

> "My God, my Father and my Friend,
> Do not desert me in my end!

"Dr. Irons, however, first gave to the English reader an adequate conception of this wonderful hymn, and his translation has been adopted in 'The Hymnal' noted. General Dix gave us a very excellent translation, and in justly rendering its magnificent picture, he improved many anxious hours in Fortress Munroe, during the darkest period of the Civil War. No hymn has been so universally admired."

"Yet we hear it, or even hear of it, very seldom."

"In the cathedral scene in 'Faust,' you may see its effect on a guilty conscience. Dr. Johnson and Sir Walter Scott both confessed they could never recite it without tears, and Mozart, in making it the basis of his famous Requiem, crowned it with his immortal genius."

"When the hymns grew full of adoration to Mary and the saints, then——?"

"Then came Luther, and it is hardly possible to estimate the important part hymns played in the Reformation. In palaces and cottages, on the highways and on the scaffold and the battlefield, they whispered peace, directed to duty, and strengthened for death. Nearly all Luther's hymns carry their parentage with them, but that grand massive chant commencing, 'Great God, what do I see and hear,' is not Luther's composition, though often ascribed to him. It was written by Ringwaldt in 1585."

"I have Luther's hymns. Who stands next to him?"

"Paul Gerhardt. His hymns have a sorrowful fervor; that fine one commencing,

"Give to the winds thy fears,
Hope and be undismayed,
God hears thy sighs, and counts thy tears,
God shall lift up thy head.

"was written under circumstances of sorrow and trial, sufficient to have tested the faith of the Father of the Faithful; but scarcely had he finished the composition when deliverance came. Gerhardt translated many Latin hymns into German, and John Wesley translated them from German into English; thus the famous hymn, 'O Head so full of bruises,' was originally Barnard's, translated by Gerhardt into German, and from the German into English by Wesley. There is Gellert also——"

"Oh, tell me something about our English hymns, and let Gellert rest."

"Very well. England was dilatory in hymn writing, though St. Columba, an Irish monk,

in the middle of the sixth century was the author of some remarkable hymns which were long sung on the sacred Isle of Iona, and among the rocky caves of adjoining isles, girt with the lonely cells of the monks. No one can read them without a thought of the saint who prayed even in his sleep and awoke with his face bright from the communion with angels and who declares in one of them that

"The best advice in the presence of God,
To me has been vouchsafed;
The King whose servant I am, will not let
Anything deceive me."

"Can you repeat any of them, Professor?"

"I have spoken of the intense love for Christ evident in the early hymns of the Eastern Church. I remember a few lines showing the same spirit in those of St. Columba:

"Christ with me, Christ before me,
Christ behind me, Chirst within me.
Christ below me, Christ above me,
Christ at my right hand, Christ at my left hand.
Christ in the hearts of all who think on me,

Christ in every eye that sees me,
Christ in every ear that hears me.

"I join myself to-day
To God's power to pilot me.
May the knowledge of God lead me!
May the eye of God look before me!
May the ear of God hearken to me!
May the hand of God defend me!
May the path of God lie before me!
May the shield of God be my shelter!
May the host of God be my safe guard!
From the snares of demons,
From the temptations of vice,
From the desires of Nature,
From all that meditate evil against me,
Afar or anear,
Alone, or in a multitude.

"Beowulf, a notable Saxon priest of the sixth century, is said to have left some hymns. I never saw them."

"Professor, a quotation from Beowulf has been the motto for my study for thirty years. It is:

"I say to my Maker
Thanks! for the Day's Work
That my Lord gives me!"

"An excellent motto. We don't know how good our work is till some day the study door is closed and our chair empty and we are shut away from our day's work by sickness." There was silence for a few moments, for we had both suffered from such a condition. Then the Professor put the thought of it away with a smile and asked, "Where were we on the hymn quest?" And I answered the smile, and reminded him that he regarded England as slow in hymn writing, and had then began with a poet of the sixth century.

"However," he said, "it was nearly a hundred years after the Reformation before Quarles, Herbert, Crashaw and Vaughan came as the types of that noble band of singers of whom Watts, Doddridge, Cowper and the Wesleys were the archetypes. Some time during the sixteenth century, the first translation of 'Jerusalem the Golden' was made. The Scotch Covenanters and the Cameronian martyrs loved it, and it is still a standard acquisition of every orthodox Scotch child. I

do not think it possible to estimate the number who have poured out their love, longing and hope in this peculiar hymn. It gives to heaven a reality that is enchanting to the heart both of childhood and maturity."

Then I smiled, and he asked, "Have you ever read it?" And I said,

"O Mother dear Jerusalem!
When shall I come to thee?
When shall my sorrows have an end?
Thy joys when shall I see?
O happy harbor of God's saints!
O sweet and pleasant soil!
In thee no sorrow can be found,
Nor grief, nor care, nor toil.
Thy walls are made of precious stones,
Thy bulwarks diamonds square,
Thy gates are made of Orient pearls,
O God if I were there!"

The Professor, smiling happily, said the lines with me, and then continued, "About the time the Covenanters and Cameronians were making their hearts glad with 'Jerusalem the Golden,' an English clergyman called Hopkins, one of the composers of the first Psalter,

wrote that fine hymn, 'All people that on earth do dwell' and Bishop Ken soon after wrote 'Awake my Soul and with the Sun,' and 'Glory to Thee my God this Night!' morning and evening hymns universally loved and sang. Better known than even these two hymns is the doxology he wrote, and which today forms part of every service of the Church Militant, 'Praise God from whom all blessings flow!'"

"But it was Watts and the Wesleys that created the English hymnology, was it not?"

"You are right. The very name of Watts makes us think of the Land of pure delight. How many tens of thousands have surveyed the wondrous Cross with him! Many dying lips beside John Wesley's have sung triumphantly, 'I'll praise my Maker while I've breath,' and how many millions of little children have learned his divine songs, only God and good angels know."

"Far off on the Texan frontier, Professor, camping in a lonely spot by the San Saba River, I met an old man who had forgotten

all his childhood's lore but some of Watts hymns."

"No doubt. I could say a few verses yet myself."

"And I sang all my children to sleep with his Cradle Hymn."

" 'Hush, my babe, lie still and slumber'?"

"The same. How did you learn it?"

"I heard my mother sing it to half a dozen boys. Perhaps when she sang it to me it was fixed on my memory. Who knows?"

"Go on."

"Doddridge wrote 'Grace, 'tis a charming sound,' and 'Thine earthly Sabbaths Lord we love,' two hymns I do not know, but Dr. Hamilton calls them 'spiritual amber.' Cowper's name is imperishably united with 'God moves in a mysterious way,' and Toplady, though he died young, left the world a rich legacy in such hymns as 'Rock of Ages,' and 'Deathless principal arise!'

"It is only necessary to name Charles and John Wesley and everyone will recall their

favorites, but all will unite in their admiration of 'Jesus, Lover of My Soul,' and 'Hark the Herald Angels sing!' That fine hymn 'Lo on a narrow neck of land' was really written on a projecting ledge at the extremity of Land's End, Cornwall. Southey thought Charles' hymn, 'Stand the omnipotent decree,' the finest hymn in the English language, and the great statesman, Cobden, left the world with 'Thee will I love, my joy, my crown,' on his lips."

"Professor, I think a finer hymn than any you have named in connection with the Wesley's, is the one beginning 'Lo! He comes with clouds descending.'"

"That hymn was written by John Cennick, though often attributed to Thomas Oliver, the author of many beautiful hymns, and especially of those majestic verses beginning,

"The God of Abraham praise,
Who reigns enthroned above;
Ancient of Everlasting days!
And God of Love!

"The hymn writers of our modern years we

will not discuss. All of us have our favorite writer and our favorite hymn, and those who have not are much to be pitied; but every soul will have a tender loving word for John Keble and his Christian Year. Keble was a child of faith, with more than half his nature in the unseen. Things visible were to him the shadows of things invisible; and some of his hymns have a reputation wide as Christendom, for instance, the well-known one containing the beloved stanza,

"Abide with me from morn till eve
For without thee I cannot live;
Abide with me when night is nigh
For without thee I dare not die."

"My friend," said the Professor in a low voice but with intense feeling, "hymns of this kind are not all earthly. They are echoes from our home—strains of heavenly melody, caught up by earthly mediums, the Magnificat of the saints on earth responding to the songs of angels in Heaven."

Then the Professor began slowly to put on his overcoat, and I said, "Do not go away yet, sir."

"I am busy today," he answered. "I only came for the book I loaned you."

"Andrew Fuller's 'Good Thoughts in Bad Times'?"

"Yes. Have you done with it?"

"It will take a long time to be done with it. Do you need it?"

"Yes, I am writing a sermon today and I want his opinion on a certain matter."

"A sermon! Oh, is it worth your while?"

"What do you mean?"

"People do not seem to care for sermons now."

"You are much mistaken. Sermons are a large fact in our social economy. I suppose there are at least two million sermons preached in our country every year, so then, I think they may claim attention. Picture to yourself society without sermons. It would be like a ship without ballast, keeling over with every

wind, letting in the waters of immorality and atheism. These weighty sermons! This pulpit balance is good! I dare not think where we should be, if this steady, pneumatic pressure in the region of faith and morals was removed."

"Yet I heard, not many days ago, a very learned and eloquent man declare the pulpit to be an effete institution. He acknowledged that it had once been a great and beneficent power, but he said that it was fast being superseded by political freedom and popular science."

"Nonsense! If science could have elevated mankind, the Pharaohs had remained unto this day; and if equality and community were equal to the task, Moore's 'Utopia' would stand for our Bible and the French Revolution for our millennium."

"But, Professor, you will admit that the preacher generally is behind the times. Also, he does his work in a slipshod fashion and without heart or enthusiasm while the pews are

full of people agitated about the burning questions of the hour. Do not think me irreverent if I say that Abraham, Isaac and Jacob do not interest the pews as much as Tom, Dick and Harry, and the tragedy in the next street. Now the Sunday newspaper is far from perfection, but it represents the people. It reflects every mood of the public. It finds out everything and it tells all it finds out. You have to go to the preacher. The paper comes to you. The sermon is one man's thought. The newspaper is made up of the thoughts of many men. You hear the preacher once a week, you get the newspaper every day. Now then, does not the press in its influence on men and women, leave the pulpit far behind?"

"My friend, you are just talking for the sake of making me talk. My present duty is to write a sermon and preach. I have not one fear that it will be labor without profit. However wicked the age has been, God never yet left himself without a witness. The saving ten

thousand are always there in the blackest hours. The world has often been lost in sin, but always some few preachers saved her. The darkest centuries of the church produced Barnard, the John the Baptist of his generation, whose passionately eloquent sermons brought all to their knees who heard them. Maillard, Menot and others prepared the way for the Reformation and I will and can maintain that every epoch of progress has been an epoch of preaching. Think of the Reformation in Scotland! Think of the Free Kirk movement, led by preachers who drew after them the great enthusiastic Highland host, and the whole of the mercantile money-making Lowlanders. This was in our own day. We can remember it. Wesley and Whitfield preached and all England broke into prayer and singing. Spurgeon and Moody and many others testify to God's wise intention to speed onward the world by what St. Paul calls 'the foolishness of preaching.' And man's opinions cannot alter the ways of God. The

term of the preacher's commission is 'unto the end of the world.' Not a doubt of that!"

"Thank you, Professor! I am like Felix—almost thou persuadest me."

"Go to church next Sunday. And if the preacher is a dumb dog, God may have something to say to you."

He went away with the words, but returned in a moment or two. "I had almost forgotten," he said, "two or three good lines, I cut out of an English newspaper for your right-hand book, just four lines of prayer, for those who have tried and failed. We don't often pray for them, but they need it—they need it—and likely enough deserve it."

And I read thoughtfully and slowly the following lines, without any signature, but Oh how many names might be written below them!

LOSERS

The Brave, who were not brave enough.
The Strong, by stronger Self assailed.
The Loving, vanquished by their love—
God comfort those who tried—and failed!

In a few moments the lines had sunk into my memory, and I reached backward my hand and took a book from a shelf near by. It was what the Professor called "my right-hand book," a book into which I transcribed any lines of poetry that touched or pleased me. These were nearly always anonymous, for it is the writer unknown to the world, whose words are living, burning words, from some crucible of the soul. He is speaking to God only the very truth and to other unknown souls who may be in the same strait or peril as himself and whom he thus asks to pray for him.

This book is in a measure a kind of diary. I can tell by the tone of the verses something of the state of my own mind at the date they had a word for me, and I turned the leaves with a divining finger. And perhaps if I write down here two or three notes that were helpful to me, they may in turn be helpful to others:

How God Speaks to Men

Some have found God where low rafters ring,
To greet the hand, that helps and cheers.
And some in prayer, and some in perfecting
Of watchful toil, through unrewarding years.
And some, not less, are His who vainly sought
His voice, and with His silence have been taught.
Who bare his chain, that bid them to be bound,
And at the end *in finding not have found.*

This was from the London *Spectator* and had no name, but what deep sorrow and perfect satisfaction is in it!

Work On

Let us toil on, the work we leave behind us
Though incomplete, God's hand will yet embalm;
Use it some way, and the news will find us,
In heaven above, and sweeten endless calm.

Trust in God

I yield to the Power constraining with a ready and full surrender,
Trusting Thee in the roughest whirlwind, in the cloud of the thickest night.
While I watch and hope in silence, for the dawn of a richer splendor,
Musing what new gift awaits me—What of Knowledge, or Love, or Light?

HELP THOU MY UNBELIEF

Because I seek Thee not, oh seek Thou me!
  Because my lips are dumb, oh hear the cry
  I do not utter, as Thou passest by,
And from my life-long bondage set me free.
Because content I perish, far from Thee,
  Oh seize and snatch me from my fate, and try
  My soul in Thy consuming fire. Draw nigh
And let me blinded, Thy salvation see.

If I were pouring at Thy feet my tears,
  If I were clamoring to see Thy face,
    I should not need the Lord, as now I need!
Whose dumb, dead soul, knows neither hopes nor fears,
  Nor dreads the outer darkness of this place,
    Because I seek not, pray not, give Thou heed!

Hymns are an inexhaustible spiritual supply and stimulus, for the soul is active and selects from them what best suits its need. They also rest in our memory, so that they go with us everywhere in sorrow or joy, at home or abroad. Historians judge the sentiments of a nation from its ballads; the devotion and spirit of the church may be judged from its hymns. St. Paul might well advise the early Christians to "teach and admonish one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs

singing and making melody in their hearts to the Lord." Hymns are the golden links binding the early and modern church together, and we should be poor indeed if it were possible to take them out of our daily life or silence them in God's service.

I spent the whole afternoon in writing down carefully from the notes made what the Professor had told me, and then Mary came to talk over Christmas and Christmas shopping. This was a subject full of most interesting asides, and it was much later than my usual hour when I was alone and full ready for darkness, quiet and sleep. God had given me a day full of pleasant things. I knew not what He had reserved for tomorrow, but I was sure of His loving-kindness, and so falling into forgetfulness I went happily to sleep.

XIV

THE PEARL OF BIRTHDAYS

When Christ was born of Mary free,
In Bethlehem that fair citie,
The angels sang in holy glee—
In Excelsis Gloria.

Heart of Christ, O cup most golden!
Brimming with salvation's wine,
Million souls have been beholden,
Unto thee for life divine!

O rest awhile, for rest is self-return;
Leave the loud world, and visit thine own breast:
The meaning of thy labors thou wilt learn,
When thus at peace with Jesus for thy guest.

THREE SCORE AND TEN

THE river of life which flows on ordinary days and weeks is not the river of life which flows from about the fifteenth of December to the New Year. There is a different *feel* in the air then and a different look on the faces of the crowd. Everyone is intent on pleasant business. If two friends meet on the street they meet with a laugh and go at once into confidences. I watched this busy, happy scene for a few minutes, and then turned to my table on which there lay a little pile of unanswered letters.

Now unanswered letters worry me, and I had resolved to take a day and clear off this debt; but I was just beginning the second letter, when Mary impulsively opened my door. "O Amelia," she cried, "I want you to come out with me! Look quick, dear, for it is going to snow."

I pointed to the letters and shook my head.

"But why do you write so many letters? If you did not write them you would not have them to answer."

"I like to write them. It is necessary and good for me, for I wish to keep wide open every gateway of my soul and life. Letter-writing is one of the pleasures that old age should pay great attention to."

"If people wrote letters like Horace Walpole or Madame de Sévigné, the mail might be a pleasure; but nobody can write a good letter now. Nobody wants to. What is the telegraph for?"

"But the pure pleasure of writing a letter is——"

"Oh, no! There is more true pleasure in trying to get all you want to say into twenty words. That is as good as finding out a puzzle. Poor Will always wrote to me in telegraph style, something like this: 'Home tomorrow. Quite well. Business middling. Your niece Jane is engaged to John Sewell; lawyer; satisfactory. Will.' He thought this much was necessary but he left me to clothe the facts in sentiment. After all it saved trouble to both of us."

"That is your view, Mary. You are yet young and can go about and see and talk with your friends. I cannot. Very few old people can, and it is a great satisfaction to have them visit you by letter. I know that the large majority of letters that come to me carry inside of them some portion of a human soul, a flitting ray of life that has traversed perhaps hundreds of miles in order to reach my hand."

"When I was a girl, Amelia, people who loved each other wrote twice a month and got on very well. Mere acquaintances did not set their pens going without some special reason. People used to tell you of events when they had happened. Now they write them off while they are happening. Twice—three times—four times a day the postman comes."

And just as she spoke there was a tap at the door and a boy entered with letters in his hand. "Morning's mail, ma'am," he said.

And Mary looked at me. "There will be a noon mail and an evening mail and a last mail

when you will doubtless be asleep. I would not encourage such imposition."

"Two of these are business letters, Mary."

"They are all right. It is the letters you get from the people you have never seen."

Then I picked out a letter from the rest and said, "I have never seen the writer of this letter, Mary. It is not likely I ever shall see her, but we have written to each other very often for a great many years, and I now know all her children by name and all their individual tastes, and hopes and plans. I expect this letter will tell me about the marriage of one of her daughters. I shall hear how the bride was dressed and what company was there and in fact be made a sharer in all their pleasure. Don't you understand that I must feel a great interest in the new wife, and am glad to be told about the new home she is going to make? It is in a lovely Yorkshire dell and I shall never see it, but among all the homes in England it will stand out clearly and dearly to me."

"And do you feel that way about all the strangers you write to?"

"In different measure. I know of, and about, homes scattered all over this land and other lands also."

"You bring your love from far off. Is it worth while?"

"Ah, Mary, *think how far I may perhaps carry it.* The writer of the letter I have just shown you, is the daughter of a very dear friend of my mother. In a few years, more or less, I hope to see my mother, and I am sure she will be glad to hear of her friends, how they do, and how they fare. For earth's story must be constantly telling in Heaven."

"Do you think that all the strange people you have written to will come to see you in Heaven?"

"If those who made friends through 'the Mammon of unrighteousness'—that is money—are to be met with love and 'conducted to everlasting habitations' by the souls they helped and comforted, will those who helped and com-

forted through love and service be any less joyfully received? Nay, the welcome might even be more affectionate, for is not love service greater than money service?"

"I see. So you write letters for a reward?"

"I sow spiritual seed on earth because I am promised a spiritual harvest in the spiritual world."

"And that satisfies you?"

"Yes—also I have pleasure in the sowing. O Mary, you know what words of love come to me from all quarters, and the letters we receive are far more significant of our characters than the letters we write."

"It *may be* so—that is all anyone can say. Writing letters comes by Nature, I suppose?"

"No, it does not; even practice does not make a good letter-writer. You must learn to sympathize with others, even when they are out of sight, and you are full of your own personal affairs."

"A man would not write a sympathetic letter at such a time."

"If he was a good man, he would; but women are the letter-writers of this epoch. And really, Mary, considering the almost unbelievable number of letters that the women of today write—the gay, the serious, the descriptive, the didactic, and the everlasting club correspondence, there is no wonder men ask a certain question."

"Pray what question?"

"When women have undisputed command of this universal power, when the United States government has provided them with all the conveniences necessary to it, what can women possibly want with a wider field of influence?"

"I do not consider letter-writing a field of influence. A great many letters ought never to be written; a still larger number ought never to be kept. Think of the divorce suits and slander suits and other objectionable phases of the occupation or amusement. Half the courts of justice could be shut up, if women would stop writing letters they ought not

to write, or if at least they could be taught to destroy those they receive of the same kind. The evils which result from a reckless preservation of letters is past telling. I am thankful to say, that I faithfully discharge the duty of destroying all my letters."

"You have got the best of the argument, Mary. Now go and buy your Christmas presents."

After this the Christmas spirit grew and grew, until one would have thought the millennium was at hand. Even the usual indifference of the hallboys vanished and they presented my mail as if they were offering me a Christmas gift. Everyone was pleasantly busy and preoccupied, but two days before the great festival the hotel was comparatively empty. The majority of the guests had gone home for the holidays, and it was astonishing the silence they left behind them.

But, Oh, how good it was to go into the Christmas streets! All the men and women had the look of spending money, instead of

making it, and the expression was so becoming that of itself it was a cause of pleasure. The store windows had broken out into good wishes and were running over with beautiful things, and it seasoned life so distinctly, that even for the sick, the sorry, the poor and the blasé, it had a temporary flavor of happiness.

The Professor was going to Brooklyn to eat his Christmas dinner with his sister, and in the afternoon of the twenty-fourth he entered my parlor with his arms full of laurel, palm and pine, and some lovely little bunches of mistletoe, which I felt sure had come from England; for I do not remember personally ever seeing it growing in either North or South America.

"I am going to dress your parlor myself," he said. "You will give me this pleasure, I know."

I answered, "Gladly," and then like all men who do a service about the house, he required a multitude of accessories—a stepladder, a three-foot rule, hammer and nails, string and

scissors, and a boy to hold and to hand the tools. But it was all well worth while, for he stopped whenever a thought about his work came to him and, sitting comfortably on the steps, talked it out. And though the whole afternoon went on in this desultory way, it was a good afternoon and I heard many things both worth remembering, and worth telling.

"I could not find any holly," he said, "yet holly has always had a supremacy in religious decorations; even backward beyond historical record, it touches many different creeds and peoples. The disciples of Zoroaster believed the sun never shadowed it, and in their baptismal rite used water in which holly had been infused. The Romans in their great feast of the Saturnalia sent branches of holly to their friends; and the northern nations decked their houses with it in winter to console their sylvan deities. Mr. Conway told me that the wildest Indians of the Pacific coast regarded the holly with 'superstitious reverence, and used it in their religious rites.'"

"And I used to know an old English carol," I said, "that began thus:

"Nay, Ivy, nay! It shall not be, I wys,
Let Holly have the mastery, as the manner is."

"There is always some hidden power or sentiment in a universal popular opinion," the Professor continued, "and we may read one of the laurel's virtues in its leaves. Those at the bottom are armed with sharp spines, those above reach are unarmed, and on the topmost boughs the leaves are glossy, and all signs of the sharp spines have disappeared."

"So then, Professor, as we grow old and heavenward, we must leave the thorns behind."

"Yes, some every year."

"Here is a branch of laurel," I said.

"The meed of mighty conquerors," he answered, "and who so worthy of this emblem as He who conquered death and led captivity captive? The Greeks hung a branch of laurel over the doorway of a house in which there was severe sickness. And as a proof of the power

of simple things to connect one age with another, I will tell you that young doctors of medicine used to be crowned with laurel leaves; and hence the words 'laureate' and 'bachelor' which come from its classical names. I was once a bachelor of arts, that is, I had passed my examination, but was not of age or standing enough to be a master of arts. There are some well-known flowers called bachelor's buttons and——"

"Is there any particular reason for their name, Professor?"

"They resembled the jagged cloth buttons anciently worn by students. Later their name might come from a custom rustics of both sexes observe—carrying the flower in their pockets to divine how they stood with their lovers. If the flower died quickly it was a bad omen. Dr. Brewer, about five years ago said, 'This rustic divination is still practiced.'"

"What a great deal you have found in a branch of laurel, Professor!"

"It has two more qualities worth naming.

It grows best under its mother's sheltering shade, and it has a wonderful power of resurrection. Long after it appears dead, if it be left undisturbed, it will put forth leaves and assume all its early vigor, and because of this peculiarity it is sometimes placed in the hands of the dead or a wreath of it is laid upon the coffin."

It was on such subjects we conversed while the parlor gradually changed its appearance. At length the last spray was placed, and the Professor with a little sigh of satisfaction took his seat in the big chair he liked, and the ladder, the tools, and the boy disappeared.

"Now I am going," he said, "for you will want the maid and the broom after me, and I have promised to dine at my club tonight. In a little while you will take these branches and leaves down and they will be cast away to——"

"No, Professor, they will not be cast away. They will be carried by fire to the elements from which they sprung. They will hold too

many sweet and holy memories to be cast into the city's refuse."

"You are right, my friend," he answered. "From the introduction of the tree in the midst of the garden of Eden to the Tree of Healing shown us in the Revelations, trees are linked with the dearest and gravest interests of humanity. They are a mysterious, mystical race. If there are ghosts anywhere, they are in trees. Perhaps it is in them, the prophesying birds learn their secrets. On the estates of ancient families in England, there are often wonderful old trees. Things are told of their foreknowledge hard to believe, yet which you do not care to doubt. And at this Christmas time, we may well remember that trees had their part in the grand sacrifice we honor; under the rootless tree planted on Calvary all the nations of the earth find healing and refuge."

Then he rose and touched reverently a leaf of laurel. "Think of this," he said. "When the Flood was over, God might have sent an

angel, but he sent a leaf and his messenger was a bird."

It was a peaceful, happy Christmas. I spent it with my daughter in our own rooms, for I knew how lonely and deserted the big dining-room downstairs was. And as we sat, I told Alice all I could remember of the Christmas Days that I had spent before her birth, the Christmas feasts in Cumberland and Westmoreland, Yorkshire, Norfolk and the Isle of Man when the ancient ceremonies of this old, old, old, very old gentleman, called Christmas, were still in fashion and favor with every age and every condition of life.

I told her how the young men on the day before Christmas went out to the woods to cut the Yule logs and how they dragged them through the streets singing and how the whole family gathered on the hearth with a song of blessing and praise to see it laid on the fire.

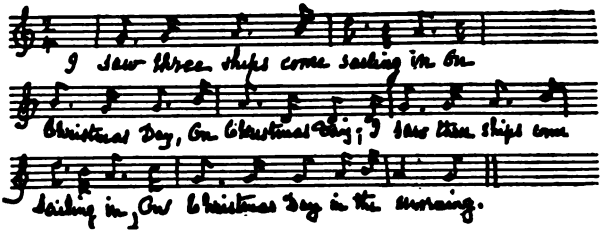
Bless the wood and bless the flame,
Bless the home for which it glows,
Bless the folk that dwell therein,
And who they are God knows.

I told her of the elaborate visiting and feasting and dancing, and above all of the carol singing and the bell ringing.

Indeed, it was mostly of the two latter items I spoke, or at least spoke with enthusiasm. For not until this mortality puts on immortality shall I forget the wonderful power they exercised. England is called "the ringing island," because there are not many places you can find in it which are out of the sound of chiming bells. And such perfect chimes! Such heavenly carolans, such jubilant music I have never heard since. In the smallest out-of-the-way hamlets, you are often so electrified and charmed by some sudden clash of most musical bells that you involuntarily answer by a cry of rapture or a rush of tears, because you are touched too deeply for words. Indeed I found I was near enough to tears in simply recalling how they

> As evening shades descend,
> Low and loud so sweetly blend
> Low at times, and loud at times,
> Ring the beautiful, wild chimes.

As for the carols, I have sung them all my life, and I sang my favorite one as I spoke, for my daughter. Then I touched for her the melody on the piano, and after a short time we were singing it together.



'And all the angels in heaven shall sing,
On Christmas Day, on Christmas Day,
And all the souls on earth shall sing
On Christmas Day in the morning!

'And all the bells on earth shall ring,
On Christmas Day, on Christmas Day,
'And all the bells in heaven shall ring,
On Christmas Day in the morning."

Sing over a few times these quaint, musical rhymes and they will dwell in your memory forevermore.

Another most exquisite carol was sometimes

sung to the same melody, a carol whose simple, solemn beauty it would be as hard to imitate as it would be to write another "Red Riding Hood," or "Robinson Crusoe," and yet it contains all of homily or good wishes one could offer on Christmas morning, when as yet,

> The moon shines bright, and the stars give light,
> A little before the day.

Here are two verses of it:

> Awake! Awake! good people all,
> Awake, and you shall hear,
> How Christ our Lord died on the cross,
> For those he loved so dear.
>
> How for the saving of our souls,
> Christ died upon the cross;
> *We never can do for Jesus Christ,*
> *What He has done for us.*

But if old Christmas could come back to us with all its traditional glories, I think really we should find it wearisome. The new Christmas is a far nobler one. It appeals to a community in its very highest form. It asks us to keep the Nativity by a gift of ourselves, of

our money, our private pleasure and personal dignity to the very young, and the very poor; and it almost compels us, once a year, to be generally genial and generous. For we are apt to grow cynical and undemonstrative as we grow old and become too ready to think good wishes mere pretence.

Left to adults, the change from old Christmas to no-Christmas-at-all would have been made with startling abruptness; but here children have been the great conservative force. Whatever was worth preserving, they have preserved, and thus Christmas has become the festival of the young and the poor. While there are children we shall tell them of the Holy Babe of Bethlehem and keep with them his nativity. And the poor—are they not always with us?

And after all, adults have lost no good thing in the change. It is more blessed to give than to receive. Therefore the higher joy is assigned them. And they may well condescend unto little children, if they will remember *who*

for them and the saving of their souls became a child. As for the poor, we have only to call to mind "the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, how that though He was rich, yet for our sakes He became poor." Then Christmas will be a feast set for eternity, and its observance grow wider and stronger every year. Who among us could bear to say good-bye to Christmas? It would be like bidding farewell to father and mother, brother and sister and home.

Then, my friends, a Merry Christmas to you all! And how infinitely preferable is this genial salutation to the modern "compliments of the season" whose frigid inanity is very like a cold shower-bath on a freezing morning. True to those who are growing old, all anniversaries are personally apt to be touched with melancholy, yet

> . . . the wiser mind
> Mourns less for what Age takes away,
> Than what it leaves behind.

And there are times when joining in the cheer-

ful mood of others is even a kind of magnanimity when we listen to no repinings, when we outlook shadows and breathe on every circumstance hope's perpetual breath. And so mid pleasant yesterdays, and confident tomorrows,

> Travel on life's common way,
> In cheerful godliness.

To such one Christmas Day presages another and another until in some blessed hour in fair Jerusalem, they hear the angels rejoicing, because

> That all the bells in heaven will ring,
> On Christmas Day in the morning.

XV

A NEW BEGINNING

We seek our Life out of ourselves, in God.
DUTCH COMMUNION SERVICE

So live that we each year may be
As time goes swiftly by,
A little further from the earth,
And nearer to the sky.

O make our closing days serene and grand!
And as the light grows dimmer, guide my hand
To work more constant, and more worthy thee.
As for the rest, I only say with grief,
I did not think the Time could be so brief!

SO the Christmas week passed away, and as it went the Christmas spirit died down to a calm satisfaction which with the advent

of the New Year became a restless looking forward, an eagerness and hurry that was familiar and even pleasant after the week's lull. For New York in the full swing of work has a vivid grandeur of its own, expressed in its hurrying crowds, overflowing pavements, the crash and lock of vehicles, and the shouts and calls of humanity.

I turned from the window. Someone in a nearby parlor was playing a song of Mendelssohn's, and its monotonous cadence filled the rooms with a pleasant melancholy. The sudden and marked change of mental atmosphere was telling and refreshing, and I went upstairs wondering how many among the multitude outside had during the past week made resolutions to turn over a new leaf and leave on the pages of the coming year a better record.

The thought gave me pleasure and I had it in my mind when Professor B. called, and I shared it with him, saying, "I have faith in the virtue of good resolutions."

"They may come to something if made by the young, but as we grow old the character stiffens and we cannot make ourselves better by passing a kind of private Act of Congress, respecting our faults. Before I was twenty-one, I had found out that New Year's resolutions were impotent against certain personal inclinations and that nothing could make me like to go to bed before midnight or to rise early in the morning."

"Yet, Professor, our lives run so much in grooves that it must be good to change our point of view and to see ourselves, if only for a moment, from the inside. In a sudden glimpse of self, we may perhaps discover that we have been frittering away time and talents, and resolve to take some plunge which will alter the whole life."

"But such a plunge means generally to lay the axe to the root of a past life, to lop off its biggest branches, to abandon ties that are bound round the heart. Most men are foiled by the magnitude of such a task."

"Say so, but yet it is good if even for one hour a man sees that he has been a fool in the ordering of his past life. Such a discovery may leave permanent traces. No man can be the same after he has once distinctly said to himself, 'I have made a blunder of my life so far. I must live differently. I must! I must!'"

"But if he does not do so, what then?"

"He will very likely make the resolution over again."

"And perhaps again, but my friend, the will becomes enervated when we get the habit of making good resolutions without fulfilling them. If we could only start right, we should all be more than conquerors. It is the wrong start that is the great fault."

"Yes, but however often we begin wrong, hope tells us that it is never too late to mend."

"The past is nearly always irreparable."

"The present is ours and we can make a fresh start. What is life but a constant struggle after better beginnings? The doc-

trine of purgatory shows the feverish desire of humanity to look on death itself as a fresh start. I think it is a healthful habit to wish and to will to do better—a stimulating, moral restorative."

"It is human to err, and——"

"Just as human to wish to start afresh."

"Of course. If men do not consider their faults every day, it is better they should do so once a year than not at all; for as Catullus says, we 'usually carry our faults in our back knapsack.' However, with all our shortcomings, here we both are, well and ready for work again. How is your friend?"

"She is well. She was with me all yesterday afternoon."

"I heard a strange thing about her. I did not like it."

"Why?"

"She has no necessity to make money. Why does she do it?"

"She is doing well and right. She was unhappy and losing her fine health; she went to

work and is happy and well and making money which she is spending wisely and generously. 'The mammon of unrighteousness' does good in her hands. How is your sister?"

"The same dear, inconsequent, happy-go-lucky little mortal. She is loitering and active, crying and laughing, busy and idle. She has the opposite of all her qualities, and I do not know whether she heeds most a spur or a bridle. She is always craving change."

"Is that wrong? Not to change with time and events means to stagnate."

"Wrong or right, few of us live in the present; we are usually providing to live in some other place or way."

"Well?"

"No, it is not well. Life should be a constant sense of the *now* with the faculty of making the best of *now*. Give my best wishes to Alice and your friend. I must go."

As I held his hand, I said, "Tomorrow begins a New Year. Have you a word for me?"

He answered, "I will ask you a question:

Does your horizon widen as you grow older?

"Do you rise by the things that are under your feet,
By what you have mastered of good or gain?"

That night, I sat pondering these questions and I met the New Year on my knees as I have done ever since I can remember. Whatever it was bringing me of good or sorrow or change I would receive it kneeling. I left every moment of it with God, for though its personal history was hidden from me, I had been told enough to make me secure and at rest. I knew God's promises, and I knew that God kept His promises. Not to me only, but to every soul that trusted in Him; and especially to those who with failing physical strength were climbing the Delectable Mountains.

With such divine help which of us need to be anxious or sorrowful. We are nearer to God than to our father and mother. We can never come of age with God. We can never grow out of our dependence on Him. We can never leave the home of His right hand. His strength is our strength. His ear lies close

to our lips. It is never taken away. We sigh into it even while we sleep and dream.

All of us have spiritual senses which might awake if we would. All that is wanted is, to *become conscious of the nearness of God.* We have only to feel after Him if haply we may find Him, for He is not far from any one of us. Then if any will do His will they shall know the truth and find the sacred happiness of seeking after God. And where should the weak rest, but on the strong; the creature of a day, than on the Eternal; the imperfect, than on the center of Perfection? And where else should God dwell, but in the human soul; for if God is in the universe among things inanimate and unmoral, how much more should He dwell in our souls? Also, a restless longing agitates the soul, guiding it to feel that it was made for some definite relation toward God, that inward longing, which makes us cry, "As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after Thee O God; my soul is athirst for God, even for the living God! I

wait for the Lord, my soul does wait, as those that watch for the morning!"

If I am asked how I know our God is thus fatherly and loving, I answer, "I have His Word for it, and if I had never seen a Bible, my ability to conceive of such a God would afford strong proof that such a God existed; for it is not to be supposed that the conception can transcend the reality."

I was going to say, "Grow old along with me," but they who trust in the Lord, have no need to grow old; they only ripen. Our youth is renewed as our days need it, and if we keep the spiritual on the top, it will be, as St. Paul promises, "though the outward man perish, the inner man is renewed day by day." Nay, as it refers to the body, it could be with us as it was with Moses and with Joshua. Turn to Joshua 14:10 and 11 and Deuteronomy 34:9. I will not quote the verses, for it is good to see them with our eyes and touch them with our fingers. And if we have had some bad and unhappy years, then we have God's prom-

ise that He "will restore to us the years that the locust hath eaten—and we shall eat in plenty, and be satisfied." [Joel 2:25.]

God has given us life, and He wishes us by the full enjoyment and employment of this life, to arrive at maturity for the next life. We are to go right on doing as much and as well as we can without counting our years or fearing about the end. For until the Master calls us, the end is not our consideration. The transition from this life to another comes to all, but we are not told *when,* because our God and Father would not have us hinder or trouble the present with thoughts and fears of what may not be for many years to come.

But whenever we have that journey to take, God will give us faith and strength for the journey. We do not need it, until we come to the hour of departure. That may be far away, or it may be near. Nineteen years has no greater security than ninety years. But if we do not fear that journey until its hour comes, we shall never fear it. For at the ap-

pointed time, God will be with us, and His rod and staff will comfort us, and it is

> Not sweeping up together,
> In whirlwind or in cloud;
> But *one by one* we come
> To the gate of the Heavenly Home.

The Call comes a little differently to all. Browning heard it while still in life's struggle and strength and died with the bugle to his lips crying,

> "Lo at the noonday in the battle of man's work time,
> Greet the Unseen with a cheer!"

Tennyson, musing by the sea, when he was over eighty, wrote the lovely stanzas beginning,

> Sunset and evening star,
> And one *clear call for me.*

Farewell, my friends! While life is given us, let us live joyfully before our God, for inner happiness closes the gates by which external misfortunes enter. A ***readiness for the duty of the hour, and no restlessness beyond it,*** that is one of the great rules for a happy and

busy life. Above all, let us remember that it is the heart that makes us young or old. Loving lies at the root of being, it keeps us from decaying; while we love God and man, we shall not grow old. And as long as health and strength continue, let us go on cheerfully with the work given us to do, then it will be God's work to make the heavenly period, perfect the earthen, to reap and garner, and in His good time draw new furrows, for a new life,

"And plant the Great Hereafter in the Now!"

And as I have said a good deal about the joy and the help of singing, I will say goodbye in Archdeacon Farrar's favorite hymn. We can all read and sing it with him, and with him hope,

To find at last beneath Thy trees of healing
The life for which we long.

When on my day of life the night is falling,
And in the winds from unsunned places blown,
I hear far voices out of darkness calling,
My feet to paths unknown.

A NEW BEGINNING

I have but Thee O Father! Let Thy Spirit
Be with me then, to comfort and uphold;
No gate of pearl, no branch of palm I merit,
No street of shining gold.

Suffice it, if my good and ill unreckoned,
And both forgiven, through Thy abounding grace;
I find myself by hands familiar beckoned,
Unto my fitting place.

Some humble door among Thy many mansions,
Some sheltering shade where sin and strivings cease;
And flows forever through heaven's green expansions,
The river of thy peace.

There from the music round about me stealing,
I fain would learn the new and holy song;
And find, at last, beneath Thy trees of healing,
The life for which I long.